

2) Faith & Perseverance Required

- A) It is notable that God does not immediately provide Jonah with the message he is to give to the Ninevites (3:3). God sends Jonah first, and provides the message later. God places us into key positions in our lives first, and provides His message when the timing is right!
- B) From the closest coastal location of the Mediterranean Sea, the trip to “the great city” of Nineveh would have been between 40-50 days walking! The great fish simply returned Jonah to land, great effort was still required!
- C) It is common to mistakenly slip into believing that following God should come naturally, even easily. However, great faith is always required (especially when God is speaking His loudest)!
- D) Further, it is common to mistakenly slip into believing that following God should be effortless, even energizing. However, great perseverance is always required (the task is often greater than it first appears)!

3) One Man With The Correct Perspective

- A) After his long journey, Jonah finally arrives at the “great city” of Nineveh (3:3). The city is dramatically described as being a “three days” walk around the exterior of the city, a bit of hyperbole to describe the greatness of Nineveh.
- B) Nineveh was a tremendously large ancient city (the site of modern day Mosul, Iraq), with a population of 120,000+ people (cf. 4:11). Jonah walks through the city for an entire day (3:4), but is not intimidated by his surroundings or the vast populace! Nineveh is great, but God is greater, and His message must go out amongst all peoples!

Perspective

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***So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh
according to the word of the LORD.
Now Nineveh was an exceedingly
great city, a three days' walk.
~Jonah 3:3 (NASB)***

1) Out Of The Belly Of The Fish

- A) Jonah's whole view of God transforms as he spends three days nights in the belly of the great fish (Jonah 1:17). Jonah deserves and expects death, but unexpectedly is provided with salvation through miraculous means (2:1-9).
- B) Once the great fish vomits (lit., “spits out”) Jonah onto dry land (2:10), Jonah gets a “do-over” or “re-start” to his journey to Nineveh (3:1-2).
- C) The beginning of the next section (3:1ff) restates the beginning of this short prophetic book of the Bible (cf. 1:1ff). Jonah is “re-born” a new man, and God is faithful to still use His man in a restored manner.
- D) Rather than run away from the presence of God, Jonah recognizes God's Word in his life and arises to go to Nineveh (3:3), out of faithfulness to God.

This is an illustration of the ancient city of Nineveh, which was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire in the last decades of their ruthless and powerful reign. Nineveh was one of four primary cities in the Assyrian Empire (Asshur, Calah, and Arbela were the others), and was founded by Nimrod, the “mighty hunter” (Genesis 10:11-12). The city name is derived from words which translate as “water enclosure” and “fish,” a reference to the Khoser & Tigris Rivers which run next to and through Nineveh.

While Nineveh’s primary patron-god was Ishtar, goddess of love and war, the city connection with water and fish could have been foundational for their listening to God’s prophet, Jonah. Nineveh is the modern day site of Mosul, Iraq where fish are still plentiful in the Tigris River. Jonah’s story is embraced by both Christian & Muslims, and there is a mosque in modern day Mosul dedicated to the prophet Jonah (“Nebi Yunus” in Arabic) and inside this structure there hangs the bone of a whale.

Excavations of ancient Nineveh have revealed that the city was filled with great luxuries such as public squares, parks, botanical gardens, and even a zoo. One of the great archaeological finds of the period is the library of King Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.; called Osnappar in Ezra 4:10).

Nahum 1:8 & 2:6 tells of the eventual fall of Nineveh to a flood, and emphasizes several details of Nineveh’s demise. The Babylonians eventually besieged the city for two years, but could not conquer Nineveh until they dammed the Khoser river which dissolved the walls and allowed them, in the third year of their siege, to breach the walls and conquer the city, exactly as it had been prophesied in Nahum.

