

Jonah at a Glance
A Summary of Background Issues¹
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Author

- Not stated within the book.
- Possibly written by Jonah or one of his contemporaries

Date

- Depends on the question of authorship.
- Assuming Jonah or a contemporary wrote the book, it can be dated to the 8th Century B.C. (700s), prior to 722 BC, when Israel fell to Assyria.

Genre

- The book describes historical, factual events experienced by the prophet Jonah.
- It is not allegory, parable, midrash, or any other form of unhistorical literature.
- It contains poetry, figurative language, and anthropomorphism, but in the context of relating a historical account.
- Most attempts to identify Jonah as unhistorical are rooted in an anti-supernatural bias that refuses to accept the miraculous elements of the story.

Message

- “This little book of Jonah is not intended to communicate merely a message, but messages.” Bryan D. Estelle
- These messages include:
 - The attributes of God, namely His holiness, His mercy, and His sovereignty.
 - God’s desire to bring salvation and true knowledge of Himself to all nations.
 - Jesus saw the book as an illustration of His own death, burial and resurrection (Matthew 12:39; 16:4; 11:29-30).
 - These are but a few of the many messages taught within the book of Jonah.

Outline²

- I. God’s First Call and Jonah’s Response (1:1-16)
- II. God’s Rescue of the Rebellious Prophet (1:17-2:10)
- III. God’s Second Commission and Jonah’s Obedience (3:1-10)
- IV. Jonah’s Displeasure and God’s Response (4:1-11)

¹ Full argumentation and defense of these positions can be found in the longer paper I have written entitled “Jonah: A Background Study”. This document can be found online at <http://ibcgso.org/MP3s/Jonah%20Background%20Reaves.pdf>

² Frank Page, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah* (New American Commentary 19B; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), p. 222.

