

Commentary Studies *in Jonah*

CHAPTER 1

1. NOW THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO JONAH THE SON OF AMITTAL, SAYING, (More people are familiar with the message of Jonah than of any other prophetic book of the Old Testament, due to its being presented in narrative form, and yet this four-chapter book presents some questions that even the greatest student is not altogether sure about. His father's name was Amittai, and according to II Kings 14:25, God had used him to announce other predictions at other times, being called in that passage the "servant" of God and giving the fulfillment of one of his predictions. The II Kings passage also states that he was from Gathhepher, which was in the land allotted to Zebulun, a village about three miles northeast of Nazareth. Though he was from what was in Jesus' time known as the land of Galilee, and his book was a part of the Hebrew Bible, due to God's broad and generous spirit that extended mercy to the repenting Gentiles of Assyria demonstrated in the book of Jonah, it was easy for the chief priests and Pharisees of Jesus' day to overlook Jonah in their statement to Nicodemus in John 7:52, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.")

2. ARISE, (A commandment that God employed to show that He meant for His order to be obeyed immediately,) GO TO NINEVEH, (The capital city of ancient Assyria, whose founding is mentioned in Gen. 10:11.) THAT GREAT CITY, (It was the mistress city of the world in Jonah's day. Some students contend that it was more elaborately and gigantically built than even the city of Babylon. It was a city greatly feared in Jonah's day because of the military might of its cruel armies. For years, critics attacked the Bible's record of such a city that was totally unknown until it was unearthed by archaeologists,) AND CRY AGAINST IT; (One small prophet against such a large, ancient, wicked city seemed like an unmatched duel, but God sends His servants out upon major tasks, assuring them of His presence with them. None, however,

have gone who have been afraid to die.) FOR THEIR WICKEDNESS IS COME UP BEFORE ME. (It would be extremely difficult to know what all this wickedness consisted of, but probably of immorality and violence that would come from their devotion to idolatry and their proud military standing. Whatever it was, Jonah was to go and cry against the city for God. God's preachers have always been those who have cried out against sinning. Whatever men do is said "to come up" before God, whether it be the prayers and alms of a sincere Cornelius, Acts 10:5, or the wicked deeds of a city like Nineveh.)

3. BUT JONAH ROSE UP TO FLEE UNTO TARSHISH FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, AND WENT DOWN TO JOPPA; AND HE FOUND A SHIP GOING TO TARSHISH: SO HE PAID THE FARE THEREOF, AND WENT DOWN INTO IT, TO GO WITH THEM UNTO TARSHISH FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. (The opening word "but" suggests the contrast between what God told him to do and what he actually did. Jonah "rose up" all right, but not to go eastward to Nineveh but westward to Tarshish, a well known ancient seaport presumably Tarsessus in far away Spain. He went by land to Joppa, where he boarded the ship for his supposed trip across the Mediterranean. With the Hebrews' conception of an omnipresent God, it is difficult to know in what sense Jonah was endeavoring to flee from His presence. The reason for his disobedience will be discussed when we get to chapter 4:2. The following outline of the material in the book of Jonah has been suggested: running from God—chapter 1; running to God—chapter 2; running with God—chapter 3; and running ahead of God—chapter 4. In Jonah's disobedience in this chapter, we can see him running from God.)

4. BUT THE LORD SENT OUT A GREAT WIND INTO THE SEA, (This book records many acts of special dealings by God: this great wind, 1:4; the lot falling upon Jonah, 1:7; the sea's ceasing to rage when Jonah was cast overboard, 1:15; the fish that swallowed him, 1:16; the preservation of his life for the several days within the animal, 1:16; the fish's vomiting out Jonah, 2:10; the gourd that grew up over his head, 4:6; the worm that killed the gourd vine, 4:7; and the vehement east wind that wearied him, 4:8.) AND THERE WAS A MIGHTY TEMPEST IN THE SEA, (The worst of storms occur on large bodies of water, where men feel the most helpless.) SO THAT THE

SHIP WAS LIKE TO BE BROKEN. (The wooden vessels of those days were no match for the fury of the aroused elements, especially when God was after His man on board.)

5. THEN THE MARINERS WERE AFRAID, (Even the hardness and manliness that would characterize those engaged in this business did not exempt them from a healthy fear before such a storm.) AND CRIED EVERY MAN UNTO HIS GOD, (Even people who do not normally pray will usually do so in such extremities. The language shows them to have been heathen men who worshipped various gods.) AND CAST FORTH THE WARES THAT WERE IN THE SHIP INTO THE SEA, TO LIGHTEN IT OF THEM. (Besides praying, they did everything within their knowledge and power to secure safety to themselves. This was the same thing done when the ship Paul was on was in dire circumstances, Acts 27:18,38. It was deemed better to lose the cargo and save themselves than to try to keep the cargo on board and both it and them perish.) BUT JONAH WAS GONE DOWN INTO THE SIDES OF THE SHIP; AND HE LAY, AND WAS FAST ASLEEP. (He for whose sake the storm was sent was the only one who slept, being unaware of the danger they were all in. The soundness of his sleep can probably be accounted for by the fact that the mental anguish that he had been under in fleeing from God had ultimately cast him into the deepest of sleep through physical exhaustion. Asleep in spite of a guilty conscience! God also may have wanted him to sleep and be awakened when the storm was at its highest.)

6. SO THE SHIPMASTER CAME TO HIM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, WHAT MEANEST THOU, O SLEEPER? ARISE, CALL UPON THY GOD, IF SO BE THAT GOD WILL THINK UPON US, THAT WE PERISH NOT. (The shipmaster could not understand how Jonah could sleep in such a time as this when he should have been up praying for deliverance. It is ironical that the only man on board who was a worshipper of the true God was the only one not praying, and all who were praying were doing so to gods that did not actually exist. Sometimes the adherents to error rebuke with their zeal the slovenness and inactivity of those who know the truth. Not to have a god upon whom one called was unthinkable in those days, atheism not being common either then or now.)

7. AND THEY SAID EVERY ONE TO HIS FELLOW,

COME, AND LET US CAST LOTS, THAT WE MAY KNOW FOR WHOSE CAUSE THIS EVIL IS UPON US. (Their superstitions caused them to suppose that every misfortune was due to somebody's sin. This time, their superstition was right, for Jonah was aboard. The practice of casting lots to determine the mind of the Higher Power is a very ancient practice.) SO THEY CAST LOTS, AND THE LOT FELL UPON JONAH. (God directed the lot in this instance so that it would fall upon the man He was after.)

8. THEN SAID THEY UNTO HIM, (Can't you see them as they all gather around Jonah and look daggers at him for causing them so much difficulty?) TELL US, WE PRAY THEE, FOR WHOSE CAUSE THIS EVIL IS UPON US; WHAT IS THINE OCCUPATION? AND WHENCE COMEST THOU? WHAT IS THY COUNTRY? AND OF WHAT PEOPLE ART THOU? (Up to this time, all they knew was he had paid his fare and was making the trip to Tarshish. Now they bombard him with questions.)

9. AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, I AM AN HEBREW; AND I FEAR THE LORD ("Jehovah", Revised Version,) THE GOD OF HEAVEN, WHICH HATH MADE THE SEA AND THE DRY LAND. (That was not good news to the mariners to hear that his God was the God of heaven who had made the sea and the land. It was easy to see that his God was after him in the raging of the sea.)

10. THEN WERE THE MEN EXCEEDINGLY AFRAID, AND SAID UNTO HIM, WHY HAST THOU DONE THIS? (That which is recorded in verse 9 does not indicate that he told them what he had done, but their question implies that he did, and then as if to let us know that he did tell them, this present verse goes on to say:) FOR THE MEN KNEW THAT HE FLED FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD, BECAUSE HE HAD TOLD THEM. (If he ever told them why he had run from God, we are not told, but their question was probably not asked to get an answer, the paraphrase of it being, "Why did you ever do this, anyway?")

11. THEN SAID THEY UNTO HIM, WHAT SHALL WE DO UNTO THEE, THAT THE SEA MAY BE CALM UNTO US? FOR THE SEA WROUGHT AND WAS TEMPESTUOUS, (The marginal reading says, "The sea grew more and more tempestuous." They were aware that something had

to be done, and they consulted him for whose sake the sea was so tempestuous to tell them what would be necessary for them to do to him.)

12. AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, TAKE ME UP, AND CAST ME FORTH INTO THE SEA; SO SHALL THE SEA BE CALM UNTO YOU: (To make such a statement would indeed be difficult, for it was fearful enough to be in the ship on such a sea without being thrown into the sea itself. Jonah had every reason to suppose that his life was about to end.) FOR I KNOW THAT FOR MY SAKE THIS GREAT TEMPEST IS UPON YOU. (There was no doubt in his mind as to why the storm beat upon them. The sin of one person often inconveniences many who are closely related or associated with him.)

13. NEVERTHELESS THE MEN ROWED HARD TO BRING IT TO THE LAND; (They went out of their way to save Jonah from such a fate.) BUT THEY COULD NOT; FOR THE SEA WROUGHT, AND WAS TEMPESTUOUS AGAINST THEM. (The God who sent the storm would not permit His purpose to be thwarted. He was out to get Jonah, and the combined efforts of the good hearted mariners could not save him.)

14. WHEREFORE THEY CRIED UNTO THE LORD, AND SAID, (Before throwing Jonah overboard, they wanted to clear themselves with Jonah's God.) WE BESEECH THEE, O LORD, WE BESEECH THEE, LET US NOT PERISH FOR THIS MAN'S LIFE, AND LAY NOT UPON US INNOCENT BLOOD: FOR THOU, O LORD, HAST DONE AS IT PLEASED THEE. (They wanted to let God know that what they were about to do to Jonah was being done in innocence, it being evident that God would not be satisfied unless they did so.)

15. SO THEY TOOK UP JONAH, AND CAST HIM FORTH INTO THE SEA; (As much as they hated to do it, they cast him overboard, and apparently Jonah offered no resistance.) AND THE SEA CEASED FROM HER RAGING. (This confirmed in their minds that they had acted according to the will of God in the matter.)

16. THEN THE MEN FEARED THE LORD EXCEEDINGLY, AND OFFERED A SACRIFICE UNTO THE LORD, AND MADE VOWS. (Being a foreigner to Jonah, this was probably the first time they had ever tried to sacrifice

to Jehovah, the God of the Jews. What they sacrificed and what vows they made, we are not told. The vows probably involved a solemn promise to worship Him the rest of their lives. With no more knowledge about the true God than they had, they could probably not have promised more than to worship Him as well as their other gods.)

17. NOW THE LORD HAD PREPARED A GREAT FISH TO SWALLOW UP JONAH. (Because of this harrowing experience, the book of Jonah is probably the best known of all the Old Testament prophetic books. The book of Jonah speaks of it as a "great fish" that swallowed him. The book of Matthew speaks of it as a "whale", Matt. 12:40. The Hebrew of Jonah and the Greek of Matthew actually state it was some large sea animal, maybe a whale as the King James translators suggest or maybe some other sea monster. Much has been written back and forth as to whether a whale can swallow a man. Some deny it while others cite actual cases where such have happened. Not to be overlooked in this case is that this verse says God had "prepared" this great fish to swallow him. It is also noteworthy from this book that man alone of God's creation has been given a will that is permitted to resist God's will—the wind obeyed, the sea obeyed, the fish obeyed, and in the 4th chapter other things obeyed, but Jonah was disobedient. It is the granting of this right that will someday call for a day of judgment to reward or to punish man according to his use or abuse of this right.) AND JONAH WAS IN THE BELLY OF THE FISH THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS. (If we are surprised to read that he was still alive, Jonah himself was probably more surprised, for no doubt he considered it the end for him when he left the ship and for sure when he was swallowed. But, God wasn't through with Jonah, and He miraculously kept him alive. Oh the mercy of God that gave Jonah another opportunity to obey His call to go to Nineveh! In his being in the animal for this period of time and then coming forth, Jonah is a type of the resurrected Christ, Matt. 12:39,40.)

CHAPTER 2

1. THEN JONAH PRAYED UNTO THE LORD HIS GOD OUT OF THE FISH'S BELLY, (Jonah was a very stubborn, determined type of person who could be brought to his

knees only by the most severe experiences. Being mixed in with all the mass of meat, sea weed, water, etc. that the monster had swallowed, Jonah was no doubt in a sticky, smelly, detestable condition. God's mercy was just as determined to bring Jonah back as had Jonah's determination been to get away. After three long days and nights, God finally won, and in repentance Jonah prayed. Some people won't pray until they are so hedged in with darkness that they know no other way to turn.)

2. AND SAID, I CRIED BY REASON OF MINE AFFLICTION UNTO THE LORD, (Jonah is penning these words sometime later—after the experience is over.) AND HE HEARD ME; OUT OF THE BELLY OF HELL (The Revised version more correctly translates "Sheol") CRIED I, (And we can be sure that he "cried" to the Lord for help.) AND THOU HEARDEST MY VOICE. (In this verse and the verse that follows, Jonah is praising God for his deliverance from the fish.)

3. FOR THOU HAST CAST ME INTO THE DEEP, (An apt name for an ocean or sea like the Mediterranean.) IN THE MIDST OF THE SEAS; AND THE FLOODS COMPASSED ME ABOUT; ALL THY BILLOWS AND THY WAVES PASSED OVER ME. (It is possible that these statements and others that follow refer to his experience before he was swallowed, but it is more likely that they refer to him as within the fish at the time.)

4. THEN I SAID, I AM CAST OUT OF THY SIGHT; (Oh how God-forsaken he felt! He realized his disobedience had brought this upon him.) YET I WILL LOOK AGAIN TOWARD THY HOLY TEMPLE. (He knew that Jehovah was a merciful God, Jonah 4:2. At first, he may have had his doubts as to whether God would be merciful to him for the backslidden state that he was in, but the prolonging of the agony in which he found himself finally caused him to look to Him for that mercy. Being inside the fish, he probably did not know which direction the temple was in, but the Hebrews were taught to pray toward the temple when they were in distress, I Kings 8: 35-50.)

5. THE WATERS COMPASSED ME ABOUT, EVEN TO THE SOUL; (He continues to narrate his experience.) THE DEPTH CLOSED ME ROUND ABOUT, THE WEEDS WERE WRAPPED ABOUT MY HEAD. (If there was ever

a man sick, fearful, and helpless, it was Jonah, yet all who forsake God will ultimately find themselves in a nightmare condition before the same God who so severely dealt with Jonah. Yet, his dealings with Jonah were not for punishment, but for chastening to get him to repent. Oh how terrible it will be then, to fall into God's hands for punishment!)

6. I WENT DOWN TO THE BOTTOMS OF THE MOUNTAINS; (The base of all land is under water. Islands are here likened to mountains thrusting their heads above the surface of the water.) THE EARTH WITH HER BARS WAS ABOUT ME FOR EVER: (He was enclosed as a prisoner without hope.) YET HAST THOU BROUGHT UP MY LIFE FROM CORRUPTION, O LORD MY GOD. (How he does praise God for restoring him to dry land, freedom, desirable conditions, and another opportunity to live!)

7. WHEN MY SOUL FAINTED WITHIN ME I REMEMBERED THE LORD: (Most people do then if they ever do. In Hosea 5:15, God said, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.") AND MY PRAYER CAME IN UNTO THEE, INTO THINE HOLY TEMPLE. (Jonah learned that one of the most wonderful things that can happen to a person is for God to answer his prayer; he had just previously learned that one of the most blessed things that a person can do is to pray. Why, then, will people wait to pray until they get in such straitened circumstances when they can pray at all times?)

8. THEY THAT OBSERVE (Regard, worship,) LYING VANITIES (Idols, I Kings 17:15,16; Jer. 10:8-11; Jer. 16:19,20. They are called "vanities" inasmuch as they are valueless as far as helping one is concerned; they are called "lying" inasmuch as idolaters trusted in them, but that trust was misplaced.) FORSAKE THEIR OWN MERCY. (Jonah realized that if his God had not been a living and true God, he could never have obtained merciful help for deliverance.)

9. BUT I WILL SACRIFICE UNTO THEE WITH THE VOICE OF THANKSGIVING; (Praise is spoken of as sacrifice, Heb. 13:15. Jonah was made to realize how much he had for which to be thankful. When elated over a triumph, he praised God; many today "celebrate" by indulging in sinful merriment: we are told to sing praises

when happy, Jas. 5:13.) I WILL PAY THAT THAT I HAVE VOWED. (Men make vows to God as to what they will do if He spares them. Jonah, too, had made some vows; his probably included a promise to go to Nineveh if spared.) SALVATION (Deliverance) IS OF THE LORD. (Jonah knew that his deliverance from the fish was as much from the Lord as was his being swallowed by the fish. He well knew he had not saved, delivered, himself from the fish.)

10. AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO THE FISH, (The fish was God's servant throughout this whole incident.) AND IT VOMITED OUT JONAH UPON THE DRY LAND. (Dry land was something that Jonah never expected to see again. Except for God's mercy, he would never have seen it.)

CHAPTER 3

1. AND THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO JONAH THE SECOND TIME, (The first time, he ran in disobedience.) SAYING,

2. ARISE, GO UNTO NINEVEH, THAT GREAT CITY, AND PREACH UNTO IT THE PREACHING THAT I BID THEE. (Every preacher is to preach the preaching that God bids.)

3. SO JONAH AROSE, AND WENT UNTO NINEVEH, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD. (He had learned what can happen to one who disobeys God.) NOW NINEVEH WAS AN EXCEEDING GREAT CITY OF THREE DAYS' JOURNEY. (This statement taken alone might mean Nineveh was such a great city that it would take three days to walk around it or that it was a great city three days' journey from where Jonah picked himself up. But, the language of the next verse seems to imply that it was such a great city that it would take three days to spread his message throughout its streets.)

4. AND JONAH BEGAN TO ENTER INTO THE CITY A DAY'S JOURNEY, AND HE CRIED, AND SAID, YET FORTY DAYS, AND NINEVEH SHALL BE OVERTHROWN. (We often hear that Jonah told them to repent, or they would perish. If he said anything about their repenting, it is not recorded in his book. It appears that the brief message he cried was that the great city had less than

two months of time to stand.)

5. SO THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH BELIEVED GOD, (For some reason, they knew that Jonah was bearing a divine message. But, how? Probably Matt. 12:38-41 and Luke 11:29,30 tell us. Those passages indicate that both Jonah and Jesus were sent of God. As a special sign to the people of His day, Jesus gave them the sign of His resurrection, which He said was comparable to Jonah's sea-monster experience (burial) and being vomited out alive (resurrection). Luke's account specifically mentions that Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites. How was he a sign? In that they had apparently learned of his miraculous deliverance from the fish, the report of which had either preceded him to Nineveh or which he bore with his own lips after he arrived.) AND PROCLAIMED A FAST, (This they did because they recognized the urgency of the situation.) AND PUT ON SACKCLOTH, (Cheap, black clothes that replaced their customary attire when they were sorrowful and grieving.) FROM THE GREATEST OF THEM EVEN TO THE LEAST OF THEM. (From the king on down. Oh that men would so believe God today and humble themselves before Him!)

6. FOR WORD CAME UNTO THE KING OF NINEVEH, AND HE AROSE FROM HIS THRONE, AND HE LAID HIS ROBE FROM HIM, AND COVERED HIM WITH SACKCLOTH, AND SAT IN ASHES. (Wearing sackcloth and sitting in ashes are often connected in the Bible: Matt. 11:1; Esth. 4:1.)

7. AND HE CAUSED IT TO BE PROCLAIMED AND PUBLISHED THROUGH NINEVEH BY THE DECREE OF THE KING AND HIS NOBLES, SAYING, LET NEITHER MAN NOR BEAST, HERD NOR FLOCK, TASTE ANY THING: LET THEM NOT FEED, NOR DRINK WATER:

8. BUT LET MAN AND BEAST BE COVERED WITH SACKCLOTH, AND CRY MIGHTILY UNTO GOD: (The cry of mournful men and bawling of hungry beasts were to unite as a petition to God for mercy.) YEA, LET THEM TURN EVERY ONE FROM HIS EVIL WAY, AND FROM THE VIOLENCE THAT IS IN THEIR HANDS. (Their petition for God's mercy was attended by repentance upon their part. Jesus recognized that the Ninevites repented, Matt. 12:41.)

9. WHO CAN TELL IF GOD WILL TURN AND REPENT, (Change His decree,) AND TURN AWAY FROM HIS FIERCE ANGER, THAT WE PERISH NOT? (Possibly the fact that a few days had been given them before the actual destruction caused them to see a faint hope of mercy being extended to them. They had no promise that God would be merciful, but they were going to attempt through repentance, fasting, and prayer to prevail upon God to be merciful to them.)

10. AND GOD SAW THEIR WORKS, THAT THEY TURNED FROM THEIR EVIL WAY; (He was as much pleased with their repentance as He had been displeased with their former disobedience.) AND GOD REPENTED OF THE EVIL, THAT HE HAD SAID THAT HE WOULD DO UNTO THEM; AND HE DID IT NOT. (He reversed the decree. Does this mean that God does not keep His Word? Jer. 18:7,8 gives a good answer to this question: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." In other words, when God says a nation will perish because of its sins, He has in mind that it will unless it repents, whether he states that fact or not.)

CHAPTER 4

1. BUT IT DISPLEASED JONAH EXCEEDINGLY, AND HE WAS VERY ANGRY.

2. AND HE PRAYED UNTO THE LORD, AND SAID, I PRAY THEE, O LORD, WAS NOT THIS MY SAYING, WHEN I WAS YET IN MY COUNTRY? THEREFORE I FLED BEFORE UNTO TARSHISH; FOR I KNEW THAT THOU ART A GRACIOUS GOD, AND MERCIFUL, SLOW TO ANGER, AND OF GREAT KINDNESS, AND REPENTEST THEE OF THE EVIL. (Jonah had the typical Hebrew attitude toward the Gentiles—one of disdain and hatred. He did not want them to be spared and had, therefore, refused the first time to go preach to them lest they would repent, and God would spare them. We see from this that he had even voiced his objection to God when being called the first time, so it was not because he was afraid to go to such a wicked city as Nineveh that he had fled.)

3. THEREFORE NOW, O LORD, TAKE, I BESEECH

THEE, MY LIFE FROM ME; FOR IT IS BETTER FOR ME TO DIE THAN TO LIVE. (He was so displeased that God was sparing Nineveh that he would rather die than live. As one writer observed, he was asking to die when he was in the poorest spiritual condition to die. We marvel at his forwardness thus to resist God and to talk up to Him, and marvel just as much at God's mercy extended toward Jonah, who was wanting to keep that mercy from the Ninevites.)

4. THEN SAID THE LORD, DOEST THOU WELL TO BE ANGRY?

5. SO JONAH WENT OUT OF THE CITY, AND SAT ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE CITY AND THERE MADE HIM A BOOTH, AND SAT UNDER IT IN THE SHADOW, TILL HE MIGHT SEE WHAT WOULD BECOME OF THE CITY. (As we read this passage, we are left wondering just why Jonah would sit down to see the outcome of the city, for from the foregoing conversation, it would seem that Jonah knew it was going to be spared. Some light may be thrown on the question by the fact that the verse could be translated, "Now Jonah had gone out of the city, and had sat..." If this rendering is correct, it would be a parenthetical statement thrown in to tell us what had gone before: Jonah had done his preaching and had gone out of the city to see what would happen. If it was destroyed, he would rejoice; if it was spared, he would complain. While sitting there, God apparently made known his merciful intentions, and Jonah blew up, which is where the beginning of the chapter cut into the story. If this latter rendering is correct, the meaning seems clear; if the King James rendering is correct, the meaning of the passage is hard to interpret.)

6. AND THE LORD GOD PREPARED A GOURD, AND MADE IT TO COME UP OVER JONAH, THAT IT MIGHT BE A SHADOW OVER HIS HEAD, TO DELIVER HIM FROM HIS GRIEF. SO JONAH WAS EXCEEDING GLAD OF THE GOURD. (He knew the relief that came from its shadow.)

7. BUT GOD PREPARED A WORM WHEN THE MORNING ROSE THE NEXT DAY, AND IT SMOTE THE GOURD THAT IT WITHERED.

8. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE SUN DID ARISE,

THAT GOD PREPARED A VEHEMENT EAST WIND; AND THE SUN BEAT UPON THE HEAD OF JONAH, THAT HE FAINTED, AND WISHED IN HIMSELF TO DIE, AND SAID, IT IS BETTER FOR ME TO DIE THAN TO LIVE. (God again sends Jonah through a bitter physical experience, though not as severe a one as the fish experience. Jonah was a man who went on his feelings: in v. 1, he was displeased and angry because Nineveh was to be spared; in v. 6, he was glad because of the shade of the gourd; in v. 8, he is weary and wants to die.)

9. AND GOD SAID TO JONAH, DOEST THOU WELL TO BE ANGRY FOR THE GOURD? (Jonah was wearing his feelings on the ends of his sleeves and was peeved at God's having smitten the gourd.) AND HE SAID, I DO WELL TO BE ANGRY, EVEN UNTO DEATH. (Again we marvel at Jonah's rashness and at God's forbearance.)

10. THEN SAID THE LORD, THOU HAST HAD PITY ON THE GOURD, FOR THE WHICH THOU HAST NOT LABOURED, NEITHER MADEST IT GROW; WHICH CAME UP IN A NIGHT, AND PERISHED IN A NIGHT:

11. AND SHOULD NOT I SPARE NINEVEH, THAT GREAT CITY, WHEREIN ARE MORE THAN SIXSCORE THOUSAND PERSONS THAT CANNOT DISCERN BETWEEN THEIR RIGHT HAND AND THEIR LEFT HAND; AND ALSO MUCH CATTLE? (The book closes with God's showing Jonah's unreasonableness in feeling sorry for the gourd, but not for the Ninevites. He draws three contrasts, either stated or implied, for Jonah's benefit: Jonah had not labored to produce the gourd while God had done much for Nineveh; the gourd had come up but recently—in a night—while Nineveh had been a city of long standing; and Jonah was concerned over one gourd—vegetation—while God was concerned over many individuals and much cattle—humanity and animals, both of which are higher forms of life than vegetation. The 120,000 persons who knew not their right hand from their left may have been infants—if so, we have some idea of the tremendous size of that ancient city—or the Ninevites may have been so spiritually benighted that they are thus referred to. The book ends with an abruptness that leaves us asking, "How did Jonah turn out? Did this straighten him out, or does he continue the role of 'goat' with which the book closes?" If the II Kings 14:25 refers to a prophecy that Jonah uttered at a latter day, we know he gets straight-

ened out. Another consideration in Jonah's favor is that he is the reputed author of the book, and the language of chapter 2:1-9 would confirm it, and if so, God inspired him to write the book after the events transpiring in it had happened. Of Jonah, we can say that he lived and learned, but he learned the hard way.)