

# Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 10, Jonah, Part 3 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 10, Jonah, Part 3, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Marv Wilson's "Jonah, Part 3" lecture explores the book of Jonah within its historical and theological context. The lecture examines God's control over nature, demonstrated through the provision of the great fish. **Wilson draws parallels between Jonah's experience and Jesus' burial, highlighting the concept of Sheol and its New Testament counterpart, Hades.** He emphasizes the significance of the name Yeshua (Jesus) as liberation and rescue. **Additionally, the lecture considers the size and importance of Nineveh, the repentance of its people, and Jonah's human flaws.** Finally, the lecture concludes with an observation of God's international love and care for the wider community.

**2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Prophetic Literature).**



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ession 10.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 10, Jonah, Part 3

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Marv Wilson's lecture on Jonah:

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Marv Wilson on Jonah, Part 3

**Overview:** This session of Dr. Wilson's lecture on the Book of Jonah focuses on the themes of God's sovereignty over nature, the concept of Sheol, the meaning of "Yeshua" (salvation), and the complexities of Jonah's prophetic role, particularly his anger and self-centeredness. It explores the story's significance in its original context and draws connections to the New Testament, particularly to Jesus' ministry and the concept of repentance.

#### Key Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. God's Sovereignty Over Nature:

- Dr. Wilson emphasizes that God is in control of nature, a direct contrast to the Canaanite god Baal, who was thought to control weather and crops. "God controls nature. Sub-theme, Baal was supposed in the Phoenician world, the Canaanite world, to control nature."
- The provision of the large fish and its actions (swallowing and vomiting Jonah) are explicitly attributed to God's control, showcasing His power over creation.
- This theme highlights that the God of Jonah is the true God who has control over the natural world.

##### 1. The Three Days and Three Nights:

- The phrase "three days and three nights" is a conventional expression for a short period, not necessarily a precise 72 hours. Dr. Wilson draws parallels to Jesus' burial, noting that he was in the tomb for approximately 39 hours.
- He clarifies that the point is not to suppress the specificity of the language but to show its literary and typological use, connecting Jonah's experience to Jesus' burial and resurrection.
- He points out that this type of language was used in a general sense.

### 1. **Sheol (The Grave):**

- Sheol is the Hebrew word for the realm of the dead in the Old Testament, where everyone went (good and bad). "Everyone went to Sheol in Old Testament times. The good, the bad, and the ugly."
- It is synonymous with the grave or the pit, and is often translated as Hades in the Greek Septuagint.
- Dr. Wilson discusses the concept of two compartments in Sheol (based on the story of Lazarus and the rich man) – one for the righteous and one for the wicked, suggesting these may have been removed at resurrection and replaced with Paradise. This is meant to inform us about Old Testament understanding, not contemporary beliefs.

### 1. **Jonah's Prayer and the Psalms:**

- Jonah's prayer from the fish's belly reflects themes found in the Psalms. "In this particular case, as he recalls this prayer he uttered from the fish's belly, he probably was recalling Psalm 118 in part."
- The Psalms, according to Dr. Wilson, offer encouragement and existential spiritual identification to many, dealing with both spiritual highs and lows.
- Jonah's prayer also suggests his recognition that God was involved in his experience even though he initially thought it was just the sailors who hurled him into the sea. "The sailors were just the instruments of the divine as he looks back and reflects on all of that."
- The concept of "remez" (hinting at previous passages) is introduced to explain how Jonah echoes the language of the Psalmist, such as in Psalm 18. "A remez is a word used in Hebrew biblical interpretation of how writers would often hint... and they are hinting at previous passages echoing back the earlier language."

### 1. **"Yeshua" (Salvation/Liberation):**

- Dr. Wilson explores the Hebrew root "Yashah," meaning to rescue, deliver, or free.
- He connects this root to "Yeshua," which is the Hebrew name for Jesus, emphasizing that it has a broader concept than just salvation from sins. "Yeshua is a much broader concept, which means liberation, freedom from anything that oppresses."

- "Yeshua" encompasses liberation and freedom from any form of oppression, which ties into Jesus' ministry, which included social justice and concern.
- This connects to both the physical liberation of Israel from Egypt and the liberation of Jonah from the fish.

### 1. **Nineveh and Its Size:**

- Nineveh was considered an "exceedingly great city," and this phrase has been interpreted in various ways.
- The traditional view is of a walled city (8 miles around), while others interpret it as a complex of cities called "greater Nineveh" with a circumference of around 60 miles.
- He discusses the phrase "three day journey" as an idiom, meaning the time to visit the city for arrival, business, and departure.
- Dr. Wilson emphasizes that Bible translation should stick to the literal text. And that interpreting the meaning of a passage, is for the commentators and not necessarily for the translators themselves. He uses the word baptize as an example. "Bible translations should not be Bible interpretations. You leave interpretation for the commentaries the responsibility of a good Bible translation is to tell you what the text says."

### 1. **The Forty Days and Repentance**

- Forty is a round number in the Bible that is used often.
- The announcement that Nineveh would be overthrown in forty days is accompanied by an implicit condition of repentance. "P.S. Please disregard this notice if you repent."
- The Ninevites' repentance is highlighted as significant. Their response is a "teshuvah" meaning to turn around, to do a 180. And it is cited by Jesus in the New Testament, demonstrating its importance.
- The king takes the lead in repentance and the whole community joins in to turn away from their sins. This is an "Amerism" which means everyone from the greatest to the least turned.
- This repentance is also linked to sackcloth and sitting in dust, which is where the practice of Ash Wednesday comes from.

- The livestock were also part of the repentance as animals are part of the community as well.

#### 1. **God's Relenting:**

- God relents or backs off rather than repents. This is due to the fact that God is not human and doesn't have human-like emotions.
- God's relenting is a response to man's change of behavior, illustrating a cooperative relationship between God and humanity. "When man makes the first move, God makes His move."
- This highlights the conditional nature of prophecy, with repentance leading to a change in God's pronouncements.

#### 1. **Jonah's Anger and Self-Pity:**

- Jonah becomes angry at God's compassion for Nineveh, revealing his intense nationalism and lack of mercy.
- Dr. Wilson points out Jonah's self-pity regarding his own comfort and lack of compassion for the people of Nineveh. "This is the self-pitying prophet."
- God challenges Jonah's anger, using the withering of the vine as a lesson about valuing God's mercy over personal comfort.
- Jonah is more concerned with himself than with the great number of Ninevites who were spared, emphasizing that he needs a radical shift in values to align more closely with God's love and concern for community.

#### 1. **God's International Love:**

- The message of the book of Jonah is God's international love.
- Dr. Wilson concludes that the book of Jonah is a lesson in God's international love and that the message of the Hebrew Bible is to be oriented toward community, not the self.

**Quotes:**

- "God controls nature."
- "Everyone went to Sheol in Old Testament times. The good, the bad, and the ugly."
- "Yeshua is a much broader concept, which means liberation, freedom from anything that oppresses."
- "Bible translations should not be Bible interpretations. You leave interpretation for the commentaries."
- "P.S. Please disregard this notice if you repent."
- "This is the self-pitying prophet."

**Conclusion:** Dr. Wilson's lecture effectively unpacks the complexities of the Book of Jonah, going beyond a simple narrative to explore theological themes, historical context, and literary devices. His teaching underscores the sovereignty of God, the meaning of salvation, the importance of repentance, and the dangers of self-centeredness. He also challenges listeners to see beyond personal comfort and engage with the world from a God-centered perspective, emphasizing the communal aspect of faith.

## 4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 10, Jonah, Part 3

### Jonah, Part 3: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. How does the book of Jonah portray God's control over nature, and how does this relate to the beliefs of the Canaanites?
2. Explain the significance of the "three days and three nights" expression in both the book of Jonah and in reference to Jesus' burial.
3. What is Sheol, and how is it depicted in the Old Testament? How does it relate to the New Testament concept of Hades?
4. How does Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 reflect the language and themes found in the Psalms? Give a specific example.
5. What does the Hebrew word *Yeshua* mean, and how is it connected to the ministry of Jesus?
6. According to Dr. Wilson, what are two possible interpretations of the size of the city of Nineveh?
7. What is the significance of the number "forty" in the Bible, and how does it relate to the book of Jonah?
8. What is the meaning of the word "overturned" in Jonah's prophecy to Nineveh? How does this connect to the conditional nature of prophecy?
9. How did the Ninevites respond to Jonah's message, and what was the historical importance of their response according to Jesus?
10. What is the significance of the *tola* worm in the book of Jonah and in the wider Bible?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The book of Jonah portrays God as having complete control over nature, including the sea and the great fish, and this contrasts with the Canaanite belief that Baal was the weather god who controlled nature. This narrative reinforces the power of the God of Israel over the natural world.

2. The "three days and three nights" expression in Jonah refers to a short period of time spent in the fish's belly, not necessarily a precise 72 hours, and it is used as a literary type to reference Jesus' burial, where the same expression is used to denote his time in the tomb.
3. Sheol is the realm of the dead in the Old Testament, where everyone, regardless of righteousness, went after death and is often translated as "the pit" and is typically synonymous with the grave. The New Testament equivalent is Hades, where the Septuagint often translated Sheol.
4. Jonah's prayer echoes themes and language found in the Psalms, such as distress, cries for help, and acknowledging God's deliverance. For example, Jonah's description of being "entangled in seaweed" is similar to Psalm 18, which speaks of "the cords of death."
5. The Hebrew word *Yeshua* means "to rescue," "to deliver," or "to free," and is the root of Jesus' name. This connection signifies that Jesus' mission is about salvation, liberation, and freedom from anything that oppresses people.
6. Two interpretations are that Nineveh was a walled city of eight miles in circumference or "greater Nineveh," which encompassed several cities with a circumference of sixty miles and was identified as an idiom of three days of travel.
7. The number "forty" is a round number in the Bible often used to represent a generation or a period of testing, such as in the forty-year reigns of Israel's first three kings or Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. In Jonah, it's the time given for Nineveh's potential destruction.
8. The word "overturned" means to flip something over, which in modern Israel refers to mixed coffee and milk, but in the context of Jonah, it refers to the destruction of Nineveh and serves as an example of the conditional nature of prophecy as there was an unspoken condition of repentance.
9. The Ninevites responded to Jonah's message with repentance, from the king to the common people, and their repentance serves as a sign to the Jews of Jesus' day, in Matthew 12 and Luke 11, highlighting the importance of turning to God.
10. The *tola* worm is a tiny insect prized for the crimson dye it produces, and its other meaning is crimson, which ties into the idea of something that cannot be eradicated and is part of the creation for which God is sovereign and that can bring life from suffering.



## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Develop a well-organized essay response to each of the following questions using specific examples from the source material.

1. Analyze the significance of the literary and theological connections between the book of Jonah and the New Testament, particularly in relation to Jesus.
2. Discuss the concept of God's sovereignty and providence as presented in the book of Jonah, considering how God uses both natural events and human actions to achieve His purposes.
3. Explore the theme of repentance in the book of Jonah, comparing the repentance of the Ninevites with Jonah's lack of repentance and how the book addresses the meaning of *teshuvah*.
4. Evaluate the conditional nature of prophecy in the book of Jonah, considering the relationship between God's warnings, human action, and divine response.
5. Examine how the book of Jonah critiques narrow nationalism and promotes the concept of God's universal love and concern for all people, not just Israel.

## Glossary

**Anthropomorphic:** Describing God with human-like forms or characteristics.

**Anthropopathism:** Describing God with human-like emotions.

**Amerism:** A literary technique using two opposites to indicate a whole, or totality.

**Hades:** The New Testament equivalent of Sheol, the realm of the dead.

**Hamsin:** A hot, dry wind that blows in off the eastern desert, often stirring up dust; also the word for fifty in both Arabic and Hebrew.

**Gehenna:** The valley of Hinnom, a garbage dump in Jerusalem, which became a metaphor for hell or the place of final punishment for the wicked.

**Mikveot:** Jewish ritual immersion in water for purification.

**Remez:** A Hebrew word for "hint"; a technique in biblical interpretation where writers hint at previous passages by echoing earlier language.

**Septuagint:** The Greek translation of the Old Testament.

**Sheol:** The Hebrew word for the realm of the dead, typically translated as "the grave" or "the pit."

**Teshuvah:** The Hebrew word for "repentance" which literally means to turn around and implies a 180-degree change of direction.

**Tola:** A Hebrew word with two meanings, one referring to a worm prized for its crimson dye, and the other meaning crimson itself, particularly the color of the dye produced by the worm.

**Tophet:** A biblical word, synonymous with Gehenna, meaning a hearth or fireplace.

**Yeshua:** The Hebrew word meaning "to rescue," "to deliver," or "to free," which is the root of Jesus' name.

## 5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 10, Jonah, Part 3, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions about the Book of Jonah

1. **What is the significance of the "great fish" in the story of Jonah?** The "great fish," or sea monster, is a key example of God's control over nature. It is specifically provided by God to rescue Jonah from drowning, demonstrating God's power and timely intervention. The swallowing and the vomiting of Jonah are both directly controlled by God, reinforcing the theme that God, not the pagan deity Baal, is sovereign over nature and all events.
2. **How should we interpret the phrase "three days and three nights" in the context of Jonah's time in the fish and Jesus' burial?** The expression "three days and three nights" is a conventional idiom in the Bible, referring to a short period that includes parts of three days. It does not always represent a full 72 hours. In the context of both Jonah's time in the fish and Jesus' burial, it is used as a literary type, not to specify an exact amount of time but to highlight a short period of entombment and subsequent deliverance. The typological connection between Jonah and Jesus is clear, wherein the story of Jonah's entombment in the fish is used as a prefigurement of Jesus' death and resurrection.
3. **What does Jonah's prayer from inside the fish reveal about his understanding of God and his situation?** Jonah's prayer from the fish's belly is a lament that reflects his deep distress and acknowledgment of his mortality. He uses language associated with the "grave" or Sheol, as if he were already dead. However, his prayer also expresses his faith in God's mercy and deliverance. His prayer references the Psalms. His recognition that God is in control of all that had happened to him shows that he understands God's sovereignty over life and death. His recall of God's mercy echoes the themes of the psalms.

4. **How does the concept of *Yeshua* (salvation/deliverance) relate to both Jesus and the story of Jonah?** The Hebrew word *Yeshua*, from which the name Jesus derives, carries a broad meaning of rescue, liberation, and freedom from any form of oppression. It is used in the story of Jonah to describe his physical salvation from the fish's belly. It also is used to describe the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt during the exodus. Jesus' primary work of redemption from sin is also encompassed by *Yeshua*. The term applies not just to spiritual salvation but also to physical and social liberation. In Luke chapter 4, Jesus describes his work using the language of *Yeshua* by referencing freedom for the captive and recovery of sight to the blind.
5. **What are the different ways of understanding the size and importance of the city of Nineveh in the book of Jonah?** The text refers to Nineveh as an "exceedingly great city," which could refer either to the walled city, or to a larger city complex consisting of other cities that were considered to be a greater Nineveh. Some scholars suggest the phrase "a three-day journey" refers to an idiomatic expression of the arrival, visit and return from a city that one was conducting business in. The city's vastness underscores the scope of God's concern and the challenge of Jonah's mission. The book emphasizes both the physical size of the city and the vast number of its inhabitants as an indication of the wide reach of God's mercy.
6. **What is the significance of the number "forty" in the book of Jonah and in the broader biblical narrative?** The number "forty" is often used as a round number representing a significant period of time. It is used in the context of Jonah's prophecy about Nineveh's impending destruction in "forty days," and also it is used to describe 40 year reign of the first three kings of Israel. It appears in several other biblical contexts like the 40 days in the wilderness for Jesus and 40 years in the wilderness for the Israelites. It is not always intended to be a precise number but represents a period of transition, testing, or divine judgment.
7. **How does the story of the Ninevites' repentance emphasize the conditional nature of prophecy and God's mercy?** The Ninevites' repentance demonstrates that God's prophetic announcements of judgment are conditional; meaning, they are contingent on the response of the people. If people repent and turn from their evil ways, God is willing to relent and show mercy. This highlights that God is not capricious or inflexible, but responds to the actions and choices of human beings. This also highlights the great love and mercy of God and the opportunity for repentance that is always available.

8. **What does the book of Jonah teach about God's concern for individuals and communities, both inside and outside of Israel?** The book of Jonah underscores God's concern for both personal salvation and community well-being. The book teaches that God cares deeply for those outside of Israel. God is presented as a God of compassion who is concerned about the salvation of all people, as evidenced by His willingness to spare the city of Nineveh because of their repentance. The book challenges a narrow view of divine favor and highlights God's international love and desire for the well-being of all people, not just a select group. The final scenes of Jonah also indicate that one of the core messages of the Hebrew Bible is community oriented not self centered.