

FILLMORE STUDY BIBLE

The Book of Jonah

Metaphysically Interpreted



FILLMORE BIBLE SOCIETY

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Fillmore Bible Society

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Back cover image: Wood sculpture, Unity of Shreveport.

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The Fillmore Bible Society

The Fillmore Bible Society are collaborators who comb through dozens of metaphysical books written by Charles Fillmore and his students as well as over 70 years of Fillmore articles and sermons for metaphysical insights into the Bible. They edit and submit these insights as short annotations which are then applied to the text of the text of the World English Bible, a contemporary-language update of the American Standard Version of the Bible, both online and in print.

This collaboration project is managed by TruthUnity Ministries, which is the publisher of The Fillmore Study Bible. In time the Fillmore Bible Society will become free-standing with its own board, Editorial staff and peer-review committee.

Members of the Fillmore Bible Society include:



Rev. Dan Beckett. Mark, Colossians.



Thomas Scheinler. Acts, Galatians.



Rev. Lisa Herklotz and Rev Jim Ernstsens.
Revelation to John.



Susan St John. Hebrews.



Rev. Mark Hicks. General Editor. John,
Acts, Romans, Corinthians 1.



Rev. Michelle Vargas. Luke.



Mary Salama. Matthew, Corinthians 2,
Thessalonians 1 & 2, Timothy 1 & 2,
Titus, Peter 1 & 2, Jude.

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Metaphysical Christianity is an authentic and distinct expression of the historic Christian faith that acknowledges and embraces the influence of Platonic and Stoic Greek philosophy in the early development of Christian theology. Much of this influence has been suppressed in orthodox Bible commentaries because metaphysical interpretation relies on an inner knowingness as authority for spiritual matters. The annotations included here embrace inner knowingness as authority.

This study bible uses the *World English Bible* translation, which is a contemporary-language update of the bible used by Charles Fillmore, the American Standard Version. The language of the WEB is not American nor British, but *contemporary, world* English, making the text pleasant to read for the broadest possible audience of global English speakers. The WEB differs from several contemporary-language translations by not adopting gender neutral language but it has provided footnotes when gender neutral language would be appropriate.

We believe that our present day culture of information, science and technology is ready to restore to it's spiritual teachings the perspectives of original thinkers who gave us not only mathematics, ethics, democracy and medicine, but also deep insights into the inner world of soul and Divine mind—the Greek metaphysicians. We also believe that contemporary Christianity needs a contemporary, global interpretation applied to a contemporary, global biblical text. The Fillmore Study Bible is our offering for addressing these spiritual needs.

JONAH



Jonah and the Whale (1621) by Pieter Lastman. Public Domain.

INTRODUCTION TO JONAH

Jonah (234-238)

<< Ruth (231-234) • (LTBL Index) • Joel (238-240) >>

The Book of Jonah (written between 400 and 350 BCE)

The Book of Jonah is a didactic work with a time setting in the period of the Assyrian empire, prior to the destruction of Nineveh in 612 B.C. It was written as a protest against racial and religious exclusiveness. The Jews were wont to believe that they were God's chosen people and deserved special favors from Him. The story of Jonah brings out the truth that all men are dear to the Almighty and that His mercy is ever extended to those who turn to Him.

As a practical spiritual lesson, The Book of Jonah is exceedingly valuable. Jonah is a type of individual who lives close to God and thus is receptive to divine direction but exceedingly stern in his conception of righteousness. Charles Fillmore states that Jonah represents:

That prophetic state of mind which, if used without divine love, fixes man in bondage to belief in a law of cause and effect wherein error sowing cannot be redeemed or forgiven (MBD/Jonah).

Jonah was commissioned by the Lord to go to Nineveh, in Assyria, to “cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me” (Jonah 1:2). If the Ninevites did not repent their great city was to be destroyed. This was an exceedingly disagreeable duty for the prophet, because he had reason to hate the Assyrians, who had inflicted great distress upon the Hebrews. Moreover, according to Jonah’s point of view, they were godless men and had no right to be saved.

We are like Jonah when we have developed spiritually to the point of receiving divine guidance and are prompted to perform a service for one who, from our point of view, is not only a sinner but has proved to be an enemy. We are therefore reluctant to extend a helping hand. We are prone to feel that justice should be done; that is, that the wrongdoer should pay the penalty for his transgressions.

Our reaction to the sinner should be entirely different. “When error effects are revealed to one by the prophetic faculty of mind, which is open to receive the outpicturing of thought causes, one should fearlessly tear away the error and immediately proclaim the saving Truth, in the spirit of forgiving love. ‘Jonah’ must be glad and must rejoice in omnipotent good” (MBD/Jonah). Jonah should have been grateful for the opportunity to help his fellow man; instead, he attempted to evade his duty, “even as you and I.”

The prophet fled to Joppa and took a ship to Tarshish. In disobeying our highest leading, no matter what excuse we make, we bring trouble upon ourselves. A great storm arose on the sea and Jonah was tossed from the ship. The condition we think will save us often proves our undoing. We, too, are swallowed by a “great fish” (Jonah 1:17), meaning that we fall into a disastrous state of affairs. Then, like Jonah, we are exceedingly repentant and cry to the Lord.

God, who is love, always gives us another chance. We, having learned at least part of our lesson—the futility of attempting to resist our revealed duty—resolve to perform it. Jonah proceeded immediately to Nineveh. He met his enemy and rendered the service designed by the Lord.

We also may act with the wrong spirit. The good deed without the good motive behind it adds no jewel to our crown. Jonah was still certain that the Ninevites should perish. He had no conception of the spiritual teaching “Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). When the Jonah state of consciousness rules in us, we may do our job capably, but as love and mercy are absent from our hearts, we are disappointed in the outcome of our work.

Anyone with a strong sense of justice, as viewed from the human plane of thought, is likely to fall into Jonah’s dilemma. His preaching was successful. The Ninevites, from the King down, repented so effectively that their city was saved. If we help a person against our personal will, he may receive great benefit but we go away empty-handed, dismayed that things did not turn out as we thought they should.

Jonah was angry at this unexpected turn of events. He sulked under the gourd that the Lord, in His mercy, had caused to grow to protect Jonah from the sun. The gourd pleased Jonah, as we are pleased when any good is manifested for us, though we may be reluctant to give God the credit. However, when we fail to give Him credit we also fail to retain the good. A worm destroyed the gourd. Jonah, who had not yet recovered from his disappointment that the Ninevites had been saved, found the destruction of the gourd quite too much. Bitterness and self-pity overcame him. He “fainted, and requested for himself that he might die” (Jonah 4:8). Whereupon the Lord reminded him that he showed pity for

the gourd though he was without compassion for the people of a great city.

We feel a certain amount of sympathy for Jonah, as perhaps all of us have been in his shoes at times. Through an experience similar to his, which we are quite likely to have, may we learn this: “The true prophet must see as God sees—that only the good is true. Evil and all its effects pass away when men repent, and the compassion and love of God should always be proclaimed to the sinner. By asking, the suffering one may obtain forgiveness; and he who is soul-sick may receive the divine compassion”. As we willingly share God’s forgiving love with others, even those who in our eyes are unworthy, we receive our own freedom and joy.

[This Introduction continues in the Introduction to Joel].

 Introduction to *Jonah* by Elizabeth Sand Turner, *Let There Be Light* pp.234-238.

JONAH 1

Jonah Tries to Run Away from God

¹ Now Yahweh’s* word came to Jonah¹ the son of Amittai,² saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh,³ that great city, and preach against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.”

³ But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish⁴ from the presence of Yahweh. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid its fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of Yahweh.

⁴ But Yahweh sent out a great wind⁵ on the sea, and there was a mighty storm on the sea, so that the ship was likely to break up. ⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and every man cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone down into the innermost parts of the ship and he was laying down, and was fast asleep. ⁶ So the ship master came to him, and said to him, “What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God!† Maybe your God† will notice us, so that we won’t perish.”

⁷ They all said to each other, “Come! Let’s cast lots, that we may know who is responsible for this evil that is on us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ Then they asked him, “Tell us, please, for

whose cause this evil is on us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? Of what people are you?”

⁹ He said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear Yahweh, the God^s of heaven, who has made the sea and the dry land.”

¹⁰ Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, “What have you done?” For the men knew⁶ that he was fleeing from the presence of Yahweh, because he had told them. ¹¹ Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may be calm to us?” For the sea grew more and more stormy.

¹² He said to them, “Take me up, and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will be calm for you; for I know that because of me this great storm is on you.”

¹³ Nevertheless the men rowed hard to get them back to the land; but they could not, for the sea grew more and more stormy against them. ¹⁴ Therefore they cried to Yahweh, and said, “We beg you, Yahweh, we beg you, don’t let us die for this man’s life, and don’t lay on us innocent blood; for you, Yahweh, have done as it pleased you.” ¹⁵ So they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea;⁷ and the sea ceased its raging. ¹⁶

Then the men feared Yahweh exceedingly; and they offered a sacrifice to Yahweh and made vows.

¹⁷Yahweh prepared a huge fish⁸ to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.⁹

1. *Jonah*. Jonah represents a phase of spiritual consciousness which sees the enormity of evil and the dire consequences of evil. Jonah fell short because he allowed himself to be intimidated by the seeming mightiness of evil, and failed to appreciate the redeeming power of eternal Good. So Jonah represents a state of mind without divine love, set in cause and effect, under which error sowing cannot be redeemed or forgiven.

2. *Amittai*. Tendency to adhere to Truth but on an intellectual level alone.

3. *Nineveh*. Seat of natural, animal forces in man's body consciousness. Nineveh's people, though not willfully wicked, awaited spiritual instruction to turn away from the outer and material.

4. *Tarshish*. Unyielding, argumentative, pure intellectual and reasoning nature in man.


5. *Wind*. Life currents that come from within and surround the whole being; the executive power of mind clearing the way to higher states of consciousness.

6. *For the men knew*. It is evident that Jonah was fully aware of his actions, clearly choosing pure reasoning and intellect away from God, which already was bringing trouble.

7. *threw him into the sea*. The sea is the waters of the subconscious mind. "There are two realms of thought; the thoughts of the mind working in the subconscious that is called in the Scripture letting the waters bring forth abundantly that is, in the waters of the mind."

8. *huge fish*. The great fish (whale) has been interpreted both negatively and positively. The negative view was held by Charles Fillmore and Elizabeth Sand Turner, who viewed the great fish as a disastrous state of affairs into which we fall because of negative thinking. (Charles Fillmore sermon August 20, 1916 and *Let There Be Light* p.236) In contrast, Ed Rabel spoke of the great fish positively. He says that Jonah requests to be thrown into the sea as a solution to a bad situation resulting from his choice, but God rescues him by sending a fish, or a very great truth idea, which totally consumes Jonah. Despite terrible circumstances, God provides Jonah an opportunity to emerge transformed. Ed Rabel, Old Testament Lectures, Jonah.

9. *three days and three nights*. Cf. The Sign of Jonah (12:40): "for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matt. 12:41-42

 Fillmore Study Bible annotations by Mark Hicks.

World English Bible Footnotes:

* 1:1. "Yahweh" is God's proper Name, sometimes rendered "LORD" (all caps) in other translations.

† 1:6. or, gods.

‡ 1:6. or, gods .

§ 1:9. The Hebrew word rendered "God" is "אֱלֹהִים" (Elohim).

JONAH 2

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

¹ Then Jonah prayed¹ to Yahweh, his God, out of the fish's belly. ² He said,

"I called because of my affliction to Yahweh.
He answered me.

Out of the belly of Sheol* I cried.
You heard my voice.

³ For you threw me into the depths,
in the heart of the seas.
The flood was all around me.
All your waves and your billows

passed over me.
⁴ I said, 'I have been banished from your sight;
 yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'
⁵ The waters surrounded me,
 even to the soul.
 The deep was around me.
 The weeds were wrapped around my head.
⁶ I went down to the bottoms of the mountains.
 The earth barred me in forever;
 yet you have brought my life up from the pit,² Yahweh my God.
⁷ "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Yahweh.
 My prayer came in to you, into your holy temple.
⁸ Those who regard vain idols forsake


their own mercy.
 But I will sacrifice to you with the voice of thanksgiving.
 I will pay that which I have vowed.
 Salvation belongs to Yahweh."

¹⁰ Then Yahweh spoke to the fish,³ and it vomited out Jonah on the dry land.

1. *Then Jonah prayed.* Jonah's prayer acknowledges his circumstances but then moves into affirmative prayer, detailing that his prayers are heard and answered, followed by thanksgiving for his coming rescue.

2. *yet you have brought my life up from the pit.* Jonah's rescue could be safety in the whale or the return to dry land. See 1:17.

3. *Then Yahweh spoke to the fish.* After Jonah's time in this new truth idea and affirmative prayer, God returns Jonah to dry land, forgiven; a clear change in circumstances.

 Fillmore Study Bible annotations by Mark Hicks.

World English Bible Footnotes:

* 2:2. Sheol is the place of the dead.

JONAH 3

Conversion of Nineveh

¹ Yahweh's word came to Jonah the second time, saying, ²"Arise, go to Nineveh,¹ that great city, and preach to it the message that I give you."

³ So Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, according to Yahweh's word. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey across. ⁴ Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried out, and said, "In forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown!"²

⁵ The people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from their greatest even to their least. ⁶ The news reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, took

off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷ He made a proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, "Let neither man nor animal, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; ⁸ but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and animal,³ and let them cry mightily to God. Yes, let them turn everyone from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. ⁹ Who knows whether God will not turn and relent, and turn away from his fierce anger, so that we might not perish?"

¹⁰ God saw their works,⁴ that they turned from their evil way. God relented of the disaster which he said he would do to them, and he didn't do it.


1. *Nineveh, Jonah.* Nineveh (exterior growth, growing vigor) represents the first manifest expression of the truth that the spirit, soul, and body of man are free and are not bound by limitations of matter. Jonah (a dove) represents the prophetic state of mind, which, if used without divine love, fixes a person in bondage to belief in a law of cause and effect, wherein error sowing cannot be redeemed or forgiven.

2. *and Nineveh will be overthrown!* Jonah's message is dogmatic, tempered by no conditions and lightened by no promise of escape. He typifies the natural man, who sees only disaster as the inevitable consequence of sin and is unable to accept the teaching that repentance for sin can alter or wipe out the consequences that would otherwise ensue.

3. *but let them be covered with sackcloth, both*

man and animal. Cattle represent physical strength, and pertain to the animal forces of the organism. These are not necessarily evil. Their unfoldment and expression depend on the understanding and directive thoughts of the individual. They may be elevated to the spiritual expression and may be used constructively, for the good only. Such a large sweeping change occurs throughout the city that even the animals will bear the symbol of repentance.

4. *God saw their works.* Though Jonah preached the city's destruction, upon immediately and completely reversing error habits, they had aligned themselves with divine Truth, which uplifts and redeems, and therefore could no longer be destroyed. This phase of Jonah's spiritual consciousness falls short in allowing itself to be intimidated by the seeming mightiness of evil, and failing to appreciate the redeeming power of eternal Good.

 Fillmore Study Bible annotations by Mark Hicks.

JONAH 4

Jonah's Anger

¹ But it displeased Jonah exceedingly,¹ and he was angry. ² He prayed to Yahweh, and said, "Please, Yahweh, wasn't this what I said when I was still in my own country?² Therefore I hurried to flee to Tarshish, for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness, and you relent of doing harm. ³ Therefore now, Yahweh, take, I beg you, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."³

⁴ Yahweh said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"⁴

⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city, and there made himself a booth and sat under it in the shade, until he might see what would become of the city.⁵ ⁶ Yahweh God prepared a vine and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the vine. ⁷ But God prepared a worm at dawn the next day, and it chewed on the vine so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun arose,

God prepared a sultry east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he was faint and requested for himself that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."⁶

1. *it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.* Jonah was angry because God did not destroy Nineveh; his prophesy of destruction was not fulfilled. Jonah saw the enormity of evil and its consequences and believed the city should be destroyed; cause and effect.

2. *wasn't this what I said when I was still in my own country?* Jonah lashes out at God, saying that he knew this might happen and that it is the reason he tried to flee in the first place. Despite listing qualities of God such as mercy and lovingkindness, Jonah is only thinking with his intellect absent of divine love, failing to understand God's willingness to forgive. This showcases that without redemptive thoughts through prayer the consciousness becomes negative, rebellious, and focused on fault-finding.

3. *for it is better for me to die than to live.* So deep rooted is his belief that the city should be destroyed that Jonah wishes for death.

4. *Is it right for you to be angry?* God asks plainly will Jonah's anger do him any good. Jonah walks away, leaving God's question unanswered.

5. *until he might see what would become of the*

city. Jonah was determined to see the city destroyed.

6. *It is better for me to die than to live.* The symbols and the situations in these verses represent the changing attitudes in the mind of one who is uncertain of his spiritual guidance. The prophetic state of mind, on its highest plane, is a dove, a declarer

of ultimate peace and good. When it functions on the intellectual or personal plane, it becomes oppressive, destructive, in that it proclaims evil and disaster continuously, and when this belief in evil becomes intensified on the bodily plane it destroys itself.

Jonah Is Reproved

⁹ God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the vine?”^①


He said, “I am right to be angry, even to death.”

¹⁰ Yahweh said, “You have been concerned for the vine, for which you have not labored, neither made it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night.
¹¹Shouldn’t I be concerned for Nineveh,^② that great city, in which are more than one hundred twenty thousand persons who can’t discern between their right hand and their

left hand, and also many animals?”

1. *Is it right for you to be angry about the vine?* God speaks to Jonah once again, questioning his anger, but Jonah insists on his anger

2. *Shouldn't I be concerned for Nineveh?* God shows Jonah the folly of his childish anger by comparing his love for the tree to that of an entire city that repents. The same wisdom that made a tree is more than capable of judging an entire city. No man should question divine mercy. God will always redeem and transform those that change their ways.

 Fillmore Study Bible annotations by Mark Hicks.

APPENDICES

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