

# RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

## 6 September 2020

times for far less reason. Even the thought of a terrifying sea journey was less frightening, and Jonah's openness and honesty, his testimony, in the face of maritime disaster is commendable: "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." Furthermore he takes responsibility for his actions in putting the ship and its crew in danger, coming to terms with his mistake, and to their credit the crew themselves pray to God and try to save Jonah before finally throwing him into the deep. So yes, there is much we can learn from Jonah.

**What is bad about Nineveh?** The city of wickedness and sin certainly lived up to its reputation. There are accounts of its cruelty and the torture of its captives, flaying (skinning) them alive in agony—literally a living hell. Nahum talks of one who comes forth from Nineveh 'who plots evil against the Lord and devises wicked plans.' Furthermore, says the Lord, "I will destroy the images and idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave for you are vile." Sennacherib had turned Nineveh into Assyria's capital city with monumental building programs (with remains visible today, and many artefacts also on display in the [British Museum](#)). Nineveh therefore represented Assyria and all that stood against the Lord God.

**Where is the Good News in all this?** Whilst railing against Nineveh, Nahum's

vision contains two references that resonate with those who know their Bibles well. Nahum 1:7 asserts that 'The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him...', which we can hardly read without remembering Psalm 9 or Psalm 46. Nahum 1:15 declares, 'Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace! Celebrate your festivals, Judah, and fulfil your vows.' This points clearly to the great Messianic reference in Isaiah 52:7 about the beautiful feet of the good news bearer, the Messiah, the Christ. God will protect his people and ensure that the wicked don't endure, which we see in our readings today, but the ultimate peace bringer is the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### SUGGESTED SONG

How Lovely On The Mountains  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDt4tq0r6gE>

### BLESSING

For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory. Let his faithful people rejoice in this honour and sing for joy on their beds...Praise the Lord. (Ps 149:4-5,9b)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the start of another season in the life of the community. Its back to school, college and university time for many families, so it is appropriate that we think about education and learning. During the four Sundays in September we are going to journey back into the Old Testament and ask two prophets to teach us a thing or two. The first, Jonah, you will know well. The second, Nahum, you may be less familiar with. We are going to allow them to take us to a far-off time and place and discover some things that God wants us to know.

Jonah is someone we are very familiar with, or so we think, because we were probably told the story of Jonah and the Whale from an early age. Given the fantastic nature of parts of the story, some think it is a myth or legend—that these things didn't necessarily happen but that the story was told and handed down as a lesson from the Lord. Jonah certainly existed and is recorded in 2 Kings 14:25 as the prophet who predicted that Jeroboam II (an evil King who did not turn away from the sins of his forebear) would restore the boundaries of Israel from the Dead Sea in the South to Lebo Hamath in the North.

When I hear this name my mind goes right back fifty years to junior school and singing in [Jonah Man Jazz](#) (yes, do click on this link) - 'Nineveh City was a city of sin, The jazzin' and a-jivin' made a terrible din. Beat groups playin' a rock and roll. And the Lord when he heard it said "Bless my soul!"

Jonah was the son of Amittai, about whom we know nothing, and most of what we do know about Jonah comes from this short book. We learn little about his life as a prophet, obedient to God's calling in Israel, but quite a lot about what happened when God called him on a special mission to challenge the behaviour of the tyrant Assyrian capital. 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah ran away from the Lord...'

We don't know anything about the prophet Nahum the Elkoshite, but the Lord used him to speak about what happened to Nineveh later around 612 BC when an alliance between the Babylonians and the Medes drove the Assyrians out of their capital city. Nineveh had clearly not listened to the earlier warnings, and any change after Jonah's message was temporary—if at all.

Zoom has become the safest way for most people to meet during this time. Our Zoom Sunday Morning Fellowship Meeting is at 10.30am, and our Monday Prayer Meetings at 7.00pm—following [Pray For Ryde](#) until 23 September. If you are able to join us, you will be welcome. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can also click on the readings and songs. There are other helpful links at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

## PRAY FOR RYDE 2020

Launched on 1 July 2020, the themes for prayer are published daily. Visit [prayfor-ryde.org](http://prayfor-ryde.org) for more information, videos and the link to the daily 7pm Zoom prayer meeting. Here are the last two week's themes: 23 August, Postal Workers; 24 August, Cinema & Theatre Groups; 25 August, Library; 26 August, Those involved in the Legal System; 27 August, Garages; 28 August, Parents & Families; 29 August, Foster Carers; 30 August, Children in Care; 31 August, YFC Youth Project; 1 September, Primary Schools; 2 September, Pre-schools & Nurseries; 3 September, Secondary Schools; 4 September, College Students & Teachers; 5 September, School Governors. We will update this list each week.

## BIBLE READINGS

[Psalm 149](#)

[Jonah 1:1-16](#)

[Nahum 1:1-15](#)

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of his faithful people. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp. (Ps 149:1-3)

## SUGGESTED SONGS

Praise My Soul The King Of Heaven  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyRIVbdsi4c>

How Great Is Our God  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FLiAK3WV7U>

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the summer with all its opportunities for rest and relaxation, even during this unusual time. We thank you for your love and faithfulness. And so we pray for the new season ahead, in which to live and serve you. We pray that our worship and our witness will be faithful to all that we have experienced of your love, and all you continue to teach us day by day. We pray for all in education, at all levels: pupils, students, teachers, tutors, lecturers and all who work in our schools, colleges, universities in many different ways. Remind us that we are all learners, and that there are many more things you want us to know, to enjoy and to benefit from. Amen.

## TO PONDER AND PRAY

Did you get all the things you planned to do done over the summer months? September is a good time to reflect on adventures and new directions, but also to consider those things you intended to do but have yet to embark on. We don't have to wait for new year! Any new day, new week, new month or new season provides the perfect opportunity. What things has God been prompting you about in recent years that you have still to put into action? Is there a change to be made, or a relationship to be mended, or a skill to be learned, or a service to be rendered? Many of us have heard God speaking to us in a variety of ways. We know it is God's voice, although we may have pushed it to the edge of our minds. Have we been running away from something important? We aren't all called to Nineveh (although it may feel like it), but we do need to say yes when God calls us to do something.

## SUGGESTED SONGS

Open The Eyes Of My Heart Lord  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwqpkD-qBt4>

In Christ Alone  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjiiF83q7G0>

## MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

**Introduction.** There are a number of reasons why many scholars have queried the full historical reliability of Jonah, the biggest of which we shall en-

counter next week! The enormity of the distances covered in the story are one issue. Jonah is probably somewhere in Palestine, God calls him to go to Nineveh the capital of Assyria (now encompassed by Mosul in northern Iraq) and instead he heads for Joppa (the modern port of Jaffa, part of greater Tel Aviv) on the Mediterranean coast, to catch a boat bound for Tarshish (which most scholars think is in Spain). There is a huge geography lesson just in the first three verses of Jonah, worth looking up on a [map](#). Yet there are many more reasons why Jonah rings true even if it is written as a myth or legend. There are things we can learn from Jonah, and the book is after all an essential part of God's authoritative Word in Scripture.

**What is good about Jonah?** Jonah really doesn't get a good press, yet there are things to admire about Jonah. He is a prophet, so he is used to listening to God and hearing his voice, then taking his message to difficult places—as we have seen in his word about Jeroboam. To be in a place and an attitude of mind and spirit where we can hear God speak is important, and to be open to using the gifts that he has given us is essential. The problem for Jonah, though, was that Nineveh was just a step too far! We don't know the details, but just the mention of Nineveh's name and reputation were enough to send Jonah scuttling off in the other direction. I'm sure we scuttle off or turn a deaf ear at