

# Kursarbeiten

aus den Masterstudiengängen  
Culture & Theology,  
Intercultural Leadership und  
Intercultural Studies

---

Die auf der Webseite der AWM Korntal verfügbaren Kurs- und Abschlussarbeiten aus dem Masterstudienprogramm wurden von Dozierenden und dem Team des Studienservice ausgewählt und mit der Genehmigung der jeweiligen Verfasserinnen und Verfasser veröffentlicht.

Diese Arbeiten unterliegen dem Urheberrecht. Nutzung und Vervielfältigung nur mit Genehmigung des Verfassers.

Kursarbeiten sind schriftliche Leistungsnachweise, die im Anschluss an die Unterrichtsphase eines Kurses verfasst werden. Die Themen der Arbeiten wählen die Studierenden selbst: Sie richten sich nach den jeweiligen Kursinhalten und nach Fragestellungen aus dem Dienst- und Lebensalltag der Verfasser.

Der veranschlagte Zeitaufwand liegt für Kursarbeiten bei etwa 35–50 Stunden, bei Abschlussarbeiten (Thesis oder Praxisprojekt mit Zulassungsarbeit) deutlich höher.

**God's Mission in the Book of Jonah**  
Insights from Jonah 3&4 on Compassion for the Nations

Research paper for the course  
BIB 5830  
Biblische Theologie der Mission  
Lecturer: Elmar Spohn DTh und Dr. Christian Großweiler

Submitted by  
Sarah Wolfer  
MA (ICS)  
2025

Columbia International University  
Korntal

## Declaration of academic integrity

1. I hereby declare that I have written this paper myself and have not used any sources or aids other than those indicated. I have identified the texts, ideas, concepts, graphics, etc. taken directly or indirectly from external sources as such and have provided complete references to the respective source.

2. use of generative AI:

Option A: Without use of generative AI

I confirm that I have written the whole paper independently, i.e. that I have not used any generative AI tools.

Option B: Mandatory indication in case generative AI was used

I am aware that the use of texts or content created using generative AI does not guarantee their quality and that I am responsible if the use of such tools results in erroneous content, violations of data protection law, copyright law or scientific misconduct (e.g. plagiarism).

I also confirm,

× that I have only used generative AI tools as an aid and that my own creativity predominates in the present work,

× that I have indicated which generative AI tools I have used, for what purpose and to what extent.

3. the present work has not been submitted in the same or a similar form to any other examination authority in Germany or abroad.

4. I am aware that a violation of the above points may have consequences and, in particular, may result in my work being assessed as “insufficient” or as “failed” and, in the event of multiple or serious attempts to cheat, may result in ex-matriculation or the university initiating proceedings to revoke any academic title awarded.

AI-based Tool	Form of Use	Reason	Affected part of the work	Remarks
ChatGPT	Checking Grammar and Structure	Final check of language and logical structure	Whole paper	I used some other words and grammar throughout the paper; ChatGPT requested I changed chapter 5 in structure which I found reasonable

## Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 God’s Mission .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Israel and Assyria in the Time of Jonah .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4 The Book of Jonah .....</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 Jonah 1 & 2.....	5
4.2 Jonah 3.....	5
4.3 Jonah 4.....	6
<b>5 The Repentance of Nineveh and its Consequences .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6 God’s Mission in the Book of Jonah.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7 The Role of Jonah .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>10</b>
8.1 Questions Raised .....	11
8.2 Ministry Context.....	11
<b>9 Bibliography .....</b>	<b>12</b>

## **1 Introduction**

Last year, I participated in a Bible study on the book of Jonah alongside Fijian, African, and American colleagues. The discussions were rich, offering me new perspectives on Jonah's character and message. In particular, my Fijian friend's interpretation of the animals' repentance and Jonah's behavior challenged my previous understanding and sparked a deeper curiosity about this short but significant book.

Traditionally, Jonah's fish story is often used as a simple storytelling tool, especially for children. However, through my coursework in Biblical Theology in Missions, and my experiences working in an organization that values short-term missions, I began to explore the book more deeply. I was curious by the layers often overlooked in familiar readings.

Recent scholarship, such as Tillema's 2023 online article, highlights the wide range of interpretations surrounding Jonah. Differences in views regarding the book's genre and dating have led to interpretations ranging from feminist to animal studies approaches. Jonah, although a short text, has generated significant debate.

In this paper, I will take a more literal approach to the book of Jonah, focusing especially on chapters 3 and 4. As I continue to engage with the complexity of oral cultures in my ministry context, I am interested in how Jonah can be used as a tool to reveal both God's character and His mission. Moving beyond the image of Jonah and the great fish, I will examine how Jonah fits into God's greater mission and what lessons his journey offers for those who are called to participate in God's work today.

I will first discuss the broader theme of God's mission in the Old Testament and then examine how Jonah fits into this larger narrative. I will also consider Nineveh's reaction to Jonah's message and the question of whether true repentance occurs. In conclusion, I will reflect on the core message of Jonah and consider how it can be applied within my own ministry context.

## **2 God's Mission**

When we think about Christian missions, the model most familiar to Western audiences is often shaped by the Apostle Paul and his efforts to proclaim the Gospel. Paul's goal was to reach both Jews and Gentiles, reconciling them to God through the message of Jesus Christ. He lived out the call to "go" and "proclaim" in a passionate way. While we find similar missionary elements among Old Testament prophets like

Isaiah, Paul's influence has heavily shaped the modern understanding of missions toward a particular pattern and method (Haubeck:44–51).

I want to highlight this Pauline view to raise awareness of how it can influence our reading of Jonah, who also received a call to "go." In contrast to how Jonah is often taught, especially in children's ministry, Jonah's story presents a unique case. Schirrmacher also notes that the theme of "sending" is present in the Old Testament, quoting Jonah as an example (:40). He emphasizes that sending is a key concept in defining mission. However, discussions around mission remain subjective, even within my small course, each participant had a slightly different view of what mission entails.

In this section, I will not attempt to define the word "mission", following Riecker and Steinberg's caution that mission can have multiple meanings depending on the context (:10). Instead, I aim to highlight the theme of mission within the Old Testament to offer a broader framework for understanding God's call to Jonah.

The Old Testament introduces key concepts of mission that lay the foundation for the New Testament's urgency in proclaiming the testimony of Jesus Christ (:27). God began His redemptive work with individuals like Abraham and Joseph, calling them to be blessings not only to their families but also to the surrounding peoples (:17). Israel as a nation was intended to represent God to the world and passages such as Deuteronomy 4:6–8 place Israel in the spotlight, a priesthood designed to reveal God to the nations (:20–21). God's mission was always global, and He desired His name to be known among all peoples.

At the heart of this mission lies the sending: the Father sending the Son, the Son sending the Holy Spirit, and the sending of believers into the world. In this movement, God reveals Himself and opens the way for reconciliation of humanity (Schirrmacher:22–23). Wright describes the Gentile mission as the "fulfillment" of what God spoke to Abraham (:194), seeing the entire biblical story as God's pursuit of relationship and worship from all nations. After the dispersion at Babel, God's promise to Abraham marks the beginning of His missional journey to redeem mankind from sin and suffering.

According to Wright, the "most missiological reading" of the Bible begins with Abraham's call to be a blessing to all nations (:199). Those blessed by God are called to bless others, modeling faith and obedience as the appropriate response to God's mission. Throughout Israel's story, the nation holds a special role as God's representative, though their spiritual and ethical failures often hindered the fulfillment of that mission

(:241). The blessing reaches its climax in Jesus Christ, who brings salvation to all nations (:191–222).

As Wright summarizes

The universal God has a universal mission, announced through Abraham, accomplished in Christ, and completed in the new creation (:253).

Israel was commissioned to be God's people on behalf of the earth (:225), but Paul and the early church later extended that blessing through the Gospel message to all peoples (:248).

Timmer also addresses the complexity of Israel's relationship with the nations, noting the tension between military exploits and the missional proclamation of God's identity (:162). In the next chapter I would like to describe the relationship between Israel and Assyria in the timeframe around when the book of Jonah took place. The only other reference about Jonah in scriptures is in 2 Kings 14, when he prophesied to Jeroboam II (Timmer:53). This helps to date the historical context around Jonah.

### **3 Israel and Assyria in the Time of Jonah**

In this chapter I would like to highlight the relationship between Israel and the Assyrian Empire. According to Na'aman, by 839 BCE the Assyrian Empire had reached a significant peak in power. Under King Shalmaneser III, Assyria defeated the kingdom of Damascus and expanded its influence southward to the borders of Israel and westward (:4–15). In this geopolitical context, Israel began to pay tribute to Assyria. Jehu, having seized the throne in Israel, initiated this tributary alliance with Assyria.

Na'aman further suggests that Jehoash, Jehu's successor, received Assyrian support during the siege of Damascus in 797/6 BCE. At that time, Damascus in attempt to resist Assyrian dominance attacked Samaria with its allies. Jehoash capitalized on the conflict, launching a counterattack against the Arameans, who may have already been weakened by Assyrian campaigns. As a result, Israel experienced regaining lost territory and enjoying relative prosperity through cooperation with Assyria (:23–26). This setting may correspond to the period in which the Book of Jonah is placed, during the reign of Jeroboam II, son of Jehoash.

Timmer also adds that during this time Assyria underwent a temporary decline, which allowed Israel to reclaim territory as Jonah had prophesied (:55–57).

He highlights the broader cultural and religious backdrop of Assyria. The Assyrian capital of Nineveh had long been a seat of royal power. The empire was built on

military conquest. Brutal tactics often accompanied this conquest which fostered animosity among neighboring nations. The Assyrian god Ashur was represented by the king, lending religious justification to imperial conquests. Defeated peoples were absorbed into the empire as expressions of Ashur's supremacy (:55–57).

Jonah is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25, where he is identified as a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II (Roop:106). Though Jeroboam is described as doing "evil in the sight of the Lord," Jonah prophesied Israel's military success under his rule. Timmer contextualizes this with the voices of Amos and Hosea, contemporaries of Jonah, who warned Israel and its neighbors of impending judgment. In the time around 782 BCE, Jonah's message appears more optimistic compared to the rebukes of Amos and Hosea. However, Jonah's prophecy aligns with a temporary geopolitical reality: Assyria's decline allowed Jeroboam II to expand Israel's borders and experience relative peace (:53).

To summarize these perspectives, while Israel generally resented Assyrian domination, the period during Jonah's ministry was marked by national confidence and territorial expansion. This comfort, however, drew prophetic criticism. Amos and Hosea warned against Israel's complacency and moral decay. Timmer goes so far as to suggest that Jonah, in the narrative bearing his name, represents Israel as arrogant, self-assured, and resistant to God's call to obedience (:54).

Following this I would like to give some insights in to the book of Jonah in the next chapters of this paper.

#### **4 The Book of Jonah**

Almost every commentary and scholarly work on Jonah discusses the possible genres of the book. Some suggest it is an allegory, others a parable, or even satire. For the purpose of this work, I align with Roop, who describes Jonah as a short story (:96). Jenson also engages with this idea and suggests that the book might draw from different literary sources or fictional traditions, as ancient storytellers often did (:31). While understanding the genre is important, especially when using Jonah in ministry, I believe that viewing it as a theological short story allows us to grasp the book's message more effectively.

Limburg highlights that the book contains 14 questions and emphasizes its oral storytelling nature, with its use of repetition and dramatic phrasing (:26–27). The dating of the book remains debated. Jenson leans toward a post-exilic composition, noting

literary signs of fiction. However, Timmer argues that the introduction of Jonah in chapter 1 implies historicity, based on the narrative style and naming conventions (:53).

In this chapter, I aim to give a brief overview of the context and chapters 1–2 in order to deepen our understanding of chapters 3 and 4, which I will examine further.

#### **4.1 Jonah 1 & 2**

Chapter 1 introduces three primary characters: God, Jonah, and the sailors. Jonah is introduced as a “Hebrew who fears the Lord,” yet his actions contradict this title as he flees from God's call to go to Nineveh. In contrast, the Gentile sailors demonstrate increasing reverence toward God. As Timmer notes, Jonah accurately speaks about God but fails to live out that confession (:59–61).

Jonah stands apart from other prophets by being sent in person to a foreign nation not just to prophesy about it. Limburg notes the Lord urges Jonah twice to deliver this message, showing the importance of the mission (:22). Jonah's flight, as revealed in 4:2, seems to come from his knowledge of God's compassion. He feared that Nineveh might repent and receive mercy. Limburg even raises the possibility that Jonah could be acting deceitfully in his role (Limburg:42–43).

The beginning of Jonah contrasts with the usual prophetic formula, when the Lord speaks, people typically obey (:46–47). Instead, his disobedience becomes the occasion for the Gentile sailors to worship God, showing God's mission is not halted by human rebellion. Jonah is swallowed by a great fish and later spat onto dry land (:74). Despite what was expected which is Jonah's death, God had more plans with him (Stuard:480).

Inside the fish, Jonah prays, seemingly repenting. The reader may expect a transformed prophet who will do his scarifies he promised starting in chapter 3. However, God must again command him to go to Nineveh (Limburg: 74). This recommissioning shows that God's mission continues despite Jonah's reluctance.

#### **4.2 Jonah 3**

Nineveh is described as a "great city", which suggests its political and symbolic importance. The description evokes awe in the reader (Limburg:78). Timmer interprets the "three days' journey" not literally, but as a literary device to underline the city's size and significance (Timmer:79).

Jonah enters the city and preaches after just one day. The briefness of his message "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned" raises questions. Did he truly

communicate what God told him to say? Was the message distorted, shortened, or delivered with minimal effort? Everything is unclear. We don't even know what language he spoke. Still, the effect is powerful (:79).

Na'man might offer an answer because of political relations between Israel and Assyria may have allowed Jonah to enter the city without hostility. He may not have been seen as an enemy, which would explain how he gained access without a disguise.

Despite the shortness of Jonah's message, Nineveh's response is profound. Timmer notes that during this period, Assyria faced famines, revolts, eclipses, and earthquakes which might be a preparation of Nineveh's repentance. In his book, Timmer provides more detail on Assyria's instability, noting that Nineveh experienced leadership changes and unrest (Timmer:75–77).

Though Jonah's prophecy is minimal, the phrase “forty days” implies a window of grace. God could have destroyed the city immediately, but instead, He allows time. The word “overthrown” (v. 4) echoes language used for Sodom and Gomorrah, suggesting Nineveh's guilt is serious and evil (Timmer:79–80).

The king's response is striking, he leaves his throne, puts on sackcloth, and calls for a national fast with even the animals participate. Although it's not recorded whether Jonah spoke to the king directly, the message clearly reached him (Timmer:167). God's mercy is shown as He relents and gives time to spare the city.

Limburg notes that Jonah is traditionally read in synagogues during Yom Kippur, where a Gentile nation becomes a model of repentance for Israel (:87). This reversal adds an important theological layer to the story. As an end note I would like to highlight the historical idea of the story again. The “king of Nineveh” might not be the king of Assyria at this time, but there is a possibility as Nineveh was a residential city of royalty (Stuard:486).

### **4.3 Jonah 4**

Jonah's anger at God's mercy reveals his heart. He did not want the Ninevites to be spared. He sets up a shelter east of the city and waits forty days to see what happens (Timmer:94). Jonah's actions show he knew God would forgive and Jonah 4:2 is again to mention as Jonah highlights the compassion of God towards everyone, yet he hoped for judgment.

God engages Jonah with a living parable. He causes a plant to grow and give Jonah shade, only to have it destroyed by a worm. Jonah's grief over the plan is in

contrasted with his lack of compassion for the people. It becomes the basis for God's final lesson.

Limburg reflects on how this plant becomes an object lesson to Jonah. God uses his misplaced affections to reveal His own deep concern for the people of Nineveh, who, like the cattle, are part of His creation and mission (Limburg:94).

In the following chapter, I will take a closer look at the repentance of Nineveh, followed by an examination of Jonah's role to learn from his example.

## **5 The Repentance of Nineveh and its Consequences**

The Old Testament illustrates God's favor in relation to God's blessings which are often linked with prosperity, while His displeasure manifests in defeat or disaster.

Within this theological framework, the story of Nineveh's repentance in the Book of Jonah stands out as a unique episode. This chapter explores whether the repentance of Nineveh had tangible consequences for the city and the Assyrian empire. Though historical evidence on this topic is limited, some exegetical insights and historical parallels offer a window into the potential outcomes of this event. I would like to add that my resources has been limited but want to highlight some facts in the following paragraphs.

It is important to acknowledge that several scholars, including Jenson and Tillema, interpret the narrative of Jonah as a fictional or didactic story rather than a historical account which each have their arguments. However, given the ministry context in which I serve, working within oral cultures and storytelling, I approach this text as a historical account, aligning with scholars such as Timmer and Stuard in their interpretation of events and historical context.

According to Stuard, there are historical indicators that support the plausibility of Jonah's mission occurring during the reign of Assur-dan III (773–756 BC). This period was marked by unrest, natural disasters such as earthquakes, and astronomical events like eclipses which all may have contributed to an openness among the Assyrians to Jonah's message. Though Nineveh was not the capital at that time, it was a significant royal residence (Stuard:440–442).

Following this period of instability, Assyria entered a phase of expansion and dominance under Tiglath-Pileser III. From 734 to 732 BC, he launched campaigns against Tyre and Israel, which may lead to the deportation of Samaria (Na'aman:63–78). This may suggest that Assyria's recovery reflect a divine allowance or even blessing, a

consequence perhaps connected to the earlier repentance of Nineveh. It is crucial to note, however, that ultimate judgment came in 614 BC when the Babylonians conquered Nineveh, fulfilling prophetic warnings.

Timmer raises a question if Nineveh truly repented. His definition of conversion includes

My working definition of conversion therefore presumes God's transformation of the heart and includes initial faith in God's self-revelation, an abandoning of other gods and an attachment to him alone, and a genuine repentance or turning from sin (Timmer: 46).

By this standard, Nineveh's response to Jonah's message falls short of true conversion. While their repentance was immediate and heartfelt as was evident in the king's exceptional humility and the city-wide fast. It may not have included a full understanding of, or commitment to, the God of Israel. In Jonah's brief recorded prophecy, there is no mention of God's name or identity, raising questions about what the Ninevites believed and to whom they were repenting.

Nonetheless, the book of Jonah concludes with God sparing Nineveh, which suggests that their repentance, however limited, had real consequences. This divine mercy is a significant moment in the narrative and aligns with the broader biblical theme of God's compassion extending beyond Israel.

Looking at subsequent history, it is possible that Assyria's flourishing under Tiglath-Pileser III was not merely coincidental but part of God's broader purposes. Assyria played a role in God's judgment against Israel, and their temporary revival might reflect God's use of them for His ends. However, this resurgence was not enduring. The lack of sustained repentance, as defined by Timmer, led to a return to violence and idolatry which practices condemned by Israelite prophets and culminating in Nineveh's destruction.

In conclusion, Nineveh's repentance did have short-term consequences like the sparing of the city and perhaps even a brief period of Assyrian prosperity. However, the absence of lasting spiritual transformation meant that this repentance was not sufficient to avert long-term judgment. The narrative serves not only as a theological reflection on God's mercy but also maybe as a reminder about the need for genuine repentance.

## **6 God's Mission in the Book of Jonah**

In the book of Jonah, we clearly see that God's mission extends far beyond the boundaries of Israel. From the outset, God's command to Jonah to go to Nineveh which

is an Assyrian city and enemy of Israel shows that God's concern and mercy are not limited to his covenant people.

Timmer highlights the complex relationship between Israel and the surrounding nations. He notes that Israel was rarely at peace with its neighbors, yet God used Israel as means to reveal Himself in a way through judgment and mercy. God's dealings with other nations, including the punishment or sparing of them, often mirrored how Israel responded to His covenant. Timmer also emphasizes that Israel was called not just to be separate, but to extend love and care to vulnerable groups such as foreigners and slaves, showing God's heart for all humanity (:19-26).

As mentioned earlier, Wright argues that Israel's disobedience often obstructed God's mission to be revealed to the nations (:241). This insight is particularly relevant when looking at Jonah's story. Jonah, as a prophet, is supposed to represent God, yet his unwillingness and disobedience hinder a fuller revelation of God to Nineveh. Nonetheless, God's plan moves forward despite Jonah's resistance which highlights God's sovereignty and grace.

The book of Jonah is an example of God's universal mission. It portrays a God who is deeply concerned about people outside of Israel, as shown through His care for the sailors and the city of Nineveh. Ultimately, the book is not just about Jonah's actions, but about who God is: merciful, patient, and committed to revealing Himself to all nations.

## **7 The Role of Jonah**

In this chapter, I will not attempt to define the term "missionary" in strict terms, especially since, as we have discussed in our course, there are various interpretations and nuances to the word depending on context and tradition. Instead, I would like to explore some key characteristics often associated with missionaries and compare them to the role Jonah plays in his story.

Unlike many missionary figures who willingly cross-cultural boundaries to proclaim God's message, Jonah is characterized first and foremost by his resistance. And yet, he stands as the first prophet in the Bible who is directly commissioned to deliver God's message to a foreign nation. His story challenges us to reflect deeply on what it means to represent God beyond our own people, especially when we are reluctant or uncomfortable.

Jonah's call in Jonah 1:2 distinguishes him from most Old Testament prophets, who typically speak to Israel or Judah. Interestingly, Jonah's reluctance is not driven by fear of failure or physical danger, but by a deeper emotional and theological struggle. He was afraid that Nineveh would repent, and that God would actually forgive them. Timmer describes Jonah's disobedience as stemming from a "deep-seated ethnocentrism" and an unwillingness to accept God's concern for non-Israelite nations (Timmer: 117). Jonah's view of divine justice was narrow and, in a way, nationalistic. In his mind, Nineveh deserved judgment, not mercy.

Nevertheless, God uses Jonah's resistance to display His sovereignty and commitment to His mission. Through the storm, the fish, and even the pagan sailors, God's message continues to unfold, showing that His purposes are not easily changed even by unwilling messengers.

Jonah's response to Nineveh's repentance is not joy but bitterness. He retreats in anger, and the story ends with a divine question: "Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh...?" (Jonah 4:11). This unresolved question invites the reader to examine their own heart. Are we aligned with God's compassion for those outside our comfort zone?

Jonah may or may not fit the traditional image of a missionary in a cross-cultural setting. His story is relevant for every believer. He teaches us that obedience is more than just going rather than representing God's heart. Through Jonah, we are challenged to examine how we respond to God's call and how we engage with those who are different from us. In the next chapter I would like to share my conclusion to those thoughts.

## **8 Conclusion**

Throughout this paper, we have seen that the story of Jonah offers a profound glimpse into the character of God. While the historical context can deepen our understanding of the story and Jonah himself, the narrative alone also gives deep insight into Jonah's actions and personality. Engaging with the text raised many interesting questions, however one aspect of God's character stayed constant. God's mercy extends to both Hebrews and Gentiles alike. The story of Jonah fits well in God's endeavour to be a God of all nations. It reflects His power to not only deal with Israel but other nations as well. In this chapter I would like to highlight some thoughts of mine and conclusions for my ministry context.

## 8.1 Questions Raised

Throughout this study, I have found myself deeply moved by the character of God in the book of Jonah. His sovereignty is evident in how He uses Jonah even in disobedience and shows mercy both to the prophet and to Nineveh. This has raised several personal and theological questions to me.

Jonah, in many ways, might embody Wright's concern about Israel misrepresenting God. From the beginning, Jonah resists God's call. Even after delivering his message, he distances himself from the people and sits outside the city, waiting to see if destruction will come. He does not seem interested in engaging further with God or the people of Nineveh. This raises an important question for me: Did Jonah faithfully represent God's heart when he preached judgment over Nineveh? The text does not give a clear answer, but it invites reflection on how I would respond in a similar situation.

Jonah appears so focused on himself that he fails to ask God what to do next or whether more could be done for Nineveh. And yet, God remains gracious, using even Jonah's limited obedience for a greater purpose. However, would God have more in store for Nineveh? Jonah's story has helped me see how often God works through imperfect vessels in His sovereignty, but was he also restricted through Jonah? It encouraged me to seek Him more even after thinking "I have done my part". I am in awe of what kind of God we serve to use imperfect vessels to finish His mission.

## 8.2 Ministry Context

The book of Jonah is a powerful and dramatic story that continues to get attention and speak to people today. In my ministry context, it has become a meaningful narrative to explore God's character and mission. I am particularly drawn to its relevance in storytelling as this story is almost perfectly drafted to be used orally.

In my daily life, I seek to build friendships with people from various cultures, and I have seen how their personal stories reflect a spiritual hunger which are often shaped by dreams, visions, or unexplained awareness of God. Like Nineveh, many are ready to hear about God. But the question remains: will we, like Jonah, hesitate or act with reluctance? Or will we be open, loving, and ready to represent God's heart?

Jonah did fulfill his calling, but perhaps not in the way God desired. With this statement I don't want to compromise God's sovereignty. However, there seems to be some truth that God chooses us to move forward with His tasks. While Nineveh repented, the story ends without Jonah leading them deeper into a relationship with God.

Instead, we find him angry and isolated. It makes me wonder how often we stop short of the mission because we do not share God's perspective or compassion. Throughout history, it seems that people try to do the task God tells them to do, but we see nations who are deeply hurt from missionaries. Maybe Jonah's story could be a first step to realize that we should see the world first through God's eyes. His grace and patience are greater than often realized.

## 9 Bibliography

- Haubeck, Wilfrid. (2014). *Beauftragt mit dem Dienst der Versöhnung: Zum Verständnis der Mission bei Paulus*. In Haubeck, Wilfrid & Heinrichs, Wolfgang (HG.): *Mission heute – Gestalt und Begründung*. Witten: Bundes-Verlag, 22-52.
- Jenson, Philip Peter. (2008). *Obidiah, Jonah, Micah: A Theological Commentary*. New York: T&T Clark International.
- Limburg, James. (1993). *Jonah: A Commentary*. Edition. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press.
- Na'aman, Nadv'av. (2005). *Ancient Israel and its neighbours: Interaction and Counter-action*. Volume 1. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns.
- Riecker, Siegbert & Steinberg. (2014). *Gottes Volk und Gottes Segen für die Völker: Die missionstheologische Herausforderung des Alten Testaments*. In Michel, Erhard, Reimer, Johannes & Spohn, Elmar (Hg.): *Christus für die Welt. Theologische Beiträge zur Mission und Gemeindegründung*. Witten: Bundes-Verlag, 9-31.
- Roop, Eugene F. (2003). *Ruth, Jonah, Esther: Believers Church' Bible Commentary*. Pennsylvania: Herald Press.
- Schirmmayer, Thomas. (2012). *Missio Dei: Mission aus dem Wesen Gottes*. Nürnberg: VTR.
- Stuard, Douglas. (1988) *World Biblical Commentary: Hosea-Jonah*. Volume 31. Michigan: Zondervan.
- Tillema, Aron. (2023). *The Book of Jonah in recent Research (Online)*. Volume 21, Issue 2. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476993X221150655> (27.04.2025)
- Timmer, Daniel C. (2018). *A Gracious and Compassionate God: Mission, Salvation and Spirituality in the Book of Jonah*. Illinois: IVP Academic.
- Wright, C. J. H. (2006). *God's Mission: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Nottingham: Inter-Varsity-Press, 189 – 329.