

Word Study ^{H3123} *Yonah* ^{H3124 G2495} *Ionas* *Jonah*

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Introduction

I wrote this article to try to better understand the symbolic meaning of the famous prophet Jonah and more specifically the meaning of his name which is the dove. He is certainly famous for a couple of reasons, the first being his seemingly supernatural experience of being in the belly of the great fish (גִּדְדָּג ^{ga-Dol}, דָּג ^{dag})^A and secondly, Yeshua points to him as the only sign deserving of a wicked generation (Mat 16:4).^B

- In the epic event about Noah and the flood, two birds are put in contrast, the raven and the dove.
- Symbol of peace; Spirit of God Mat 3:16
- Compare with Word-Study-H8449-tor-turtledove-G5167-trugon, article #[173](#).
- ToDo add more commentary.

H3124 *yonah* ^{KJC:19} *Jonah*¹⁹

יוֹנָה

The same as [H3123](#); *Jonah*, an Israelite: - Jonah.

[2Ki 14:25](#),^C [Jon 1:1](#), [Jon 1:3](#), [Jon 1:5](#), [Jon 1:7](#), [Jon 1:15](#), [Jon 1:17](#) (2), [Jon 2:1](#), [Jon 2:10](#), [Jon 3:1](#), [Jon 3:3-4](#) (2), [Jon 4:1](#), [Jon 4:5-6](#) (3), [Jon 4:8-9](#) (2)

^A That's a big *dawg*

^B Pulled from Only-the-sign-of-Jonah-the-prophet-was-given-to-the-wicked-and-adulterous-generation, article #[543](#).

^C [2Ki 14:25](#) He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of YHVH God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant **Jonah**, the son of Amittai (^{H573} my truth), the prophet, which *was* of Gathhepher.

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A proper noun designating Jonah, a prophet called to preach repentance to Nineveh. He came from Gath Hopher. His name means "dove." His father's name was Amittai. Jonah foretold the expansion of Israel under Jeroboam II ([2Ki 14:25](#)). He was called by God to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to the capital of Assyria. Amazingly, it was his understanding and grasp of God's compassion and mercy toward the wicked that caused him to refuse, initially, to fulfill God's call ([Jon 4:1-2](#)).

H3123 yonah ^{KJC: 31} **dove**^{(s)(s')²¹}, **pigeon(s)**¹⁰

יונה

Probably from the same as [H3196](#); a *dove* (apparently from the *warmth* of their mating): - dove, pigeon.

LXX: [G4058](#) peristera

Total KJV Occurrences: 31

dove, 14 [Gen 8:8-12](#) (5), [Psa 55:6](#), [Son 2:13-14](#) (2), [Son 5:2](#), [Son 6:9](#), [Isa 38:14](#), [Jer 48:28](#), [Hos 11:11](#) (2)

pigeon(s), 9 [Lev 1:14](#), [Lev 5:7](#), [Lev 5:11](#), [Lev 12:6](#), [Lev 12:8](#), [Lev 14:22](#), [Lev 14:30](#), [Lev 15:14](#), [Lev 15:29](#), [Num 6:10](#)

doves, 5 [Son 1:15](#), [Son 4:1](#), [Son 5:12](#), [Isa 59:11](#), [Isa 60:8](#), [Eze 7:16](#), [Nah 2:7](#)

doves', 2 [Son 1:15](#), [Son 4:1](#)

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yōnāh: A feminine noun denoting a pigeon or dove. It was the bird **used by Noah** to test the conditions after the flood waters began to abate ([Gen 8:8-12](#)). Its cooing sounds were compared to the **moaning** of a **sick**, suffering person ([Isa 38:14](#); [Isa 59:11](#); [Eze 7:16](#)). Its wings would glisten as gold or appear as gilded with silver, a symbol of a woman dwelling at **home in safety** ([Psa 68:13](#) ^[14]). It was used as an **endearing** expression about one's beloved ([Son 2:14](#); [Son 4:1](#); [Son 5:2](#), [Son 5:12](#)). It is used in many more figurative expressions: of **Ephraim like a silly dove** ([Hos 7:11](#)); of the exiles eagerly returning as doves ([Hos 11:11](#)); of ships with white sails ([Isa 60:8](#)) and many more. Dove's dung was a last resort as food in a time of famine ([2Ki 6:25](#)). A young dove or pigeon could be offered to the Lord ([Lev 1:14](#); [Lev 5:7](#), [Lev 5:11](#); [Lev 12:6](#), [Lev 12:8](#); [Num 6:10](#)). The psalmist wished he had wings as a dove by which to escape his troubles ([Psa 55:6](#) ^[7]).

G2495 Ionas ^{KJC:13} **Jonas**¹², **Jona**¹

Ἰωνᾶς

Of Hebrew origin [[H3124](#)]; *Jonas* (that is, *Jonah*), the name of two Israelites: - Jonas.

KJC: jonas, 12 [Mat 12:39-41](#) (4), [Mat 16:4](#), [Luk 11:29-30](#) (2), [Luk 11:32](#) (2), [Joh 21:15-17](#) (3) **jona, 1** [Joh 1:42](#)

Joh 1:40-42 Simon son of Jona shall be called Kefa meaning *Petros* ^{stone}

⁴⁰ One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the

Christ. ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, **Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas**, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Joh 1:40-42 OJB

⁴⁰ One of the two was the *achi Shimon Kefa*. His name was Andrew. He was one of the two who heard *Yochanan* and followed him. ⁴¹ Andrew first finds his own *achi Shimon Kefa* and says to him, We have found the *Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach!*--the word, being translated, means "Messiah". ^{Dan 9:25; Psa 2:2; 1Sa 2:10} ⁴² Andrew led Shimon to *Yehoshua*. When *Yehoshua* gazed at Shimon, he said, You are *Shimon Bar Yonah*. You will be called *Kefa*, which is translated *Petros* ^{Rock Gen 17:5,15; 32:28; 35:10 = name changing verses}.

ISBE on Jonah *yonah* ^{H3124} dove

יונה

(1) According to 2Ki 14:25, Jonah, the son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher, a prophet and servant of Yahweh, predicted the restoration of the land of Israel to its ancient boundaries through the efforts of Jeroboam II. The prophet lived and labored either in the early part of the reign of Jeroboam (790-750 BC), or during the preceding generation. He may with great probability be placed at 800-780 BC. His early ministry must have made him popular in Israel; for he prophesied of victory and expansion of territory. His native village of Gath-hepher was located in the territory of **Zebulun** (Jos 19:13).

(2) According to the book bearing his name, Jonah the son of Amittai received a command to preach to Nineveh; but he fled in the opposite direction to escape from the task of proclaiming Yahweh's message to the great heathen city; was arrested by a storm, and at his own request was hurled into the sea, where he was swallowed by a great fish, remaining alive in the belly of the fish for three days. When on his release from the body of the fish the command to go to Nineveh was renewed, Jonah obeyed and announced the overthrow of the wicked city. When the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of the prophet, God repented of the evil He had threatened to bring upon them. Jonah was grieved that the oppressing city should be spared, and waited in the vicinity to see what would be the final outcome. An intense patriot, Jonah wished for

the destruction of the people that threatened to swallow up Israel. He thought that Yahweh was too merciful to the heathen oppressors. By the lesson of the gourd he was taught the value of the heathen in the sight of Yahweh.

It is the fashion now in scholarly circles to treat the Book of Jonah as fiction. The story is said to be an allegory or a parable or a symbolic narrative. Why then did the author fasten upon a true and worthy prophet of Yahweh the stigma of rebellion and narrowness? On theory that the narrative is an allegory, J. Kennedy well says that "the man who wrote it was guilty of a gratuitous insult to the memory of a prophet, and could not have been inspired by the prophet's Master thus to dishonor a faithful servant."

(3) our Lord referred on two different occasions to the sign of Jonah the prophet (Mat 12:38-41; Luk 11:29-32; Mat 16:4). He speaks of Jonah's experience in the belly of the fish as parallel with His own approaching entombment for three days, and cites the repentance of the Ninevites as a rebuke to the unbelieving men of his own generation. Our Lord thus speaks both of the physical miracle of the preservation of Jonah in the body of the fish and of the moral miracle of the repentance of the Ninevites, and without the slightest hint that He regarded the story as an allegory.

ISBE on Dove

duv (תור, *tōr*, יונה, *yōnāh*; περιστέρῳ, *peristerá*; Latin *Zenaedura carolinensis*): **A bird of the family *Columbidae*.**^D Doves and pigeons are so closely related as to be spoken and written of as synonymous, yet there is a distinction recognized from the beginning of time. It was especially marked in Palestine, because doves migrated, but pigeons remained in their chosen haunts all the year. Yet doves were the wild birds and were only confined singly or in pairs as caged pets, or in order to be available for sacrifice. Pigeons, without question, were the first domesticated birds, the record of their conquest by man extending if anything further back than ducks, geese and swans. These two were the best known and the most loved of all the myriads of birds of Palestine. Doves were given preference because they remained wild and were more elusive. The thing that escapes us is usually a little more attractive than the thing we have. Their loving natures had been noted, their sleek beautiful plumage, their plump bodies. They were the most precious of anything offered for sacrifice. Their use is always specified in preference to pigeons if only one bird was used; if both, the dove is frequently mentioned first. Because of their docility when caged, their use in sacrifice, and the religious superstition concerning them, they were allowed to nest unmolested and, according to species, flocked all over Palestine. The turtle-dove nested in gardens and vineyards, and was almost as tame as the pigeons. The palm turtle-dove took its name from its love of homing in palm trees, and sought these afield, and in cities, even building near the temple in Jerusalem. It also selected thorn and other trees. It has a small body, about ten inches in length, covered with bright chestnut-colored feathers, the neck dappled with dark, lustrous feathers. The rock dove swarmed over, through, and among the cliffs of mountains and the fissures of caves and ravines. The collared turtle-dove was the largest of the species. It remained permanently and

^D ToDo: reference where some believe that the meaning behind Christopher Columbus's last name means dove → Jonah

homed in the forests of Tabor and Gilead, around the Dead Sea, and along the Jordan valley. This bird was darker than the others and took its name from a clearly outlined collar of dark feathers encircling the neck, and was especially sought for caged pets on account of its size and beauty.

In all, the dove is mentioned about fifty times in the Bible. Many of these references are concerning its use in sacrifice and need not all be mentioned. The others are quoted and explained from a scientific standpoint and in accordance with the characteristics and habits of the birds. The first reference to the dove occurs in [Gen 8:8-12](#), in the history of the flood; then follows its specified use in sacrifice; note of its migratory habits is made, and then in poetry, prophecy, comparison, simile and song, it appears over and over throughout the Bible.

In [Gen 8:8-12](#), we read, "And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated." Noah first sent out a raven, because it was a strong, aggressive bird and would return to its mate. But the raven only flew over the water and returned to perch on the ark. This was not satisfactory, so Noah in looking for a bird better suited to his purpose, bethought him of the most loving and tender bird he knew - the dove. It not only would return to the ark, but would enter and go to the cage of its mate, and if it found green food it would regurgitate a portion for her or its young, or if not nesting he could tell by its droppings if greenery had been eaten and so decide if the waters were going down. And this is precisely what happened. The dove came back, and the watching Noah saw it feed its mate little green olive leaves, for the dove never carries food in the beak, but swallows and then regurgitates it to mate and young. This first reference to birds was made on account of the loving, tender characteristics of the species; the next, because they were the most loved by the people, and therefore chosen as most suitable to offer as sacrifice ([Gen 15:9](#)). In [Lev 1:14](#) f, doves are mentioned as sacrifice: "And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off its head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be drained out on the side of the altar." In [Lev 5:7](#) the proper preparation of the sacrifice is prescribed.

For method of handling sacrifice see [Lev 5:8](#), [Lev 5:9](#), [Lev 5:10](#). In [Lev 12:6](#) the law for a sacrifice for a mother is given, and [Lev 12:8](#) of same chapter provides that if she be too poor to offer a lamb, doves or pigeons will suffice. In [Lev 14:4-8](#) the reference for the sacrifice of a leper is merely to “birds,” because it is understood that they are pigeons and doves, and it contains the specification that if the victim is too poor to afford so elaborate a sacrifice, a smaller one will suffice. The birds are named in [Lev 14:22](#) : “Two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin-offering, and the other a burnt-offering” (compare [Lev 15:14](#), [Lev 15:29](#); [Num 6:10](#)). When David prayed for the destruction of the treacherous, he used the dove in comparison, and because he says he would “lodge in the wilderness” he indicates that he was thinking of the palm turtle.

“And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!
Then would I fly away, and be at rest” ([Psa 55:6](#)).

In chanting a song of triumph, David used an exquisite thought.

“When ye lie among the sheepfolds,
It is as the wings of a dove covered with
silver,
And her pinions with yellow gold” ([Psa 68:13](#)).

He referred to the rock dove because the metallic luster on its neck would gleam like gold in sunshine, and the soft grayish-white feathers beneath the wings as he would see the bird above him in flight would appear silver-like. By this quotation David meant that in times of peace, when men slept contentedly at home among their folds, their life was as rich with love and as free in peace as the silver wing of the dove that had the gold feathers and was unmolested among the inaccessible caves and cliffs. In [Psa 74:19](#) the term “turtle-dove” is used to indicate people whom the Almighty is implored to protect: “Oh deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the wild beast: forget not the life of thy poor for ever.”

Solomon uses the dove repeatedly in comparison or as a term of endearment. In [Son](#)

[1:15](#); [Son 4:1](#); [Son 5:12](#), he compares the eyes of his bride full, tender, beautiful, with those of a dove. In [Son 2:12](#) he uses the voice of the dove as an indication of spring. In [Son 2:14](#) he addresses the bride as a rock dove, In [Son 5:2](#) is another term of endearment, this time used in the dream of the bride (compare [Son 6:9](#)). [Isa 38:14](#) has reference to the wailing, mournful dove note from which the commonest species take the name “mourning dove.” The reference in [Isa 60:8](#) proves that the prophet was not so good an observer, or so correct in his natural history as David, who may have learned from the open. As a boy, David guarded the flocks of his father and watched the creatures around him. When exulting over the glory of the church in the numerous accessions of Gentiles, Isaiah cried, “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” This proves that he confounded pigeons and doves. Doves were wild, mostly migratory, and had no “windows.” But the clay cotes of pigeons molded in squares so that one large cote sheltered many pairs in separate homes had the appearance of latticed windows and were used as a basis in estimating a man's wealth. This reference should be changed to read, “and as pigeons to their windows.” In [Jer 8:7](#) the fact is pointed out that doves were migratory; and in [Jer 48:28](#) people are advised to go live in solitary places and be peaceable, loving and faithful, like the rock doves. See also [Eze 7:16](#) : “But those of them that escape shall escape, and shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, every one in his iniquity.” This merely means that people should be driven to hide among the caves and valleys where the rock doves lived, and that the sound of their mourning would resemble the cry of the birds. It does not mean, however, that the doves were mourning, for when doves coo and moan and to our ears grow most pitiful in their cries, they are the happiest in the mating season. The veneration cherished for doves in these days is inborn, and no bird is so loved and protected as the dove - hence, it is unusually secure and happy and its mournful cry is the product of our imagination only. The dove is the happiest of birds. [Hos 7:11](#) and [Hos 11:11](#) each compares people with doves; the first, because the birds at times appear foolishly trusting; the second, because, while no bird is more confiding, none is more easily

frightened. “And Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria” ([Hos 7:11](#)). “They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria; and I will make them to dwell in their houses, saith Yahweh” ([Hos 11:11](#)). The reference in [Nah 2:7](#) is to the voice of the birds.

New Testament references will be found in a description of the baptism of Jesus ([Mat 3:16](#)). People are admonished to be “harmless as doves” ([Mat 10:16](#)). “And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves” ([Mat 21:12](#)). This proves that these birds were a

common article of commerce, probably the most used for caged pets, and those customarily employed for sacrifice.

Dove's Dung (ינים חרי, *ḥārī yōnīm*, K^ethibh for דביונים, *dibhyōnīm*): [2Ki 6:25](#) : “And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a kab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver.” This seems so repulsive that some commentators have tried to prove the name applied to the edible root of a plant, but the history of sieges records other cases where matter quite as offensive was used to sustain life. The text is probably correct as it stands.