

## Surah 10, Yunus [Prophet Yunus], Mecca 51

[One Year Before Hijra]

### The Quran's Text & Yusuf Ali's Translation:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةً آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ... <sup>up</sup>

10: 98. Why was there not a single township (among those We warmed), which believed -- so its Faith should have profited it -- except the people of Jonah?

**[Ali's comments: 1478.** Allah in His infinite Mercy points out the contumacy of Sin as a warning, and the exceptional case of Nineveh and its Prophet Jonah is alluded to. The story of Jonah is told in 37:139-148, which would be an appropriate place for further comments. Here it is sufficient to note that Nineveh was a very ancient town which is now no longer on the map. Its site is believed to be marked by the two mounds on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite the flourishing city of Mosul on the right bank, about 230 miles north- north-west of Baghdad. One of the mounds bears the name of "the Tomb of NabiYunus." Archeologists have not yet fully explored its antiquities. But it is clear that it was a very old Sumerian town, perhaps older than 3500 B.C. It became the capital of Assyria. The first Assyrian Empire under Shalmaneser 1, about 1300 B.C., became the supreme power in Western Asia. Babylon, whose tributary Assyria had

formerly been, now became tributary to Assyria. The second Assyrian Empire arose about 745 B.C., and Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.) beautified the town with many Public Works. It was destroyed by the Scythians (so-called Medes) in 612 B.C. If the date of Jonah were assumed to be about 800 B.C., it would be between the First and the Second Assyrian Empire; when the City was nearly destroyed for its sins, but on account of its repentance was given a new lease of glorious life in the Second Empire.]

...لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا...

**When they believed, We removed from them the Penalty of Ignominy in the life of the Present,**

...وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٩٨﴾

**and permitted them to enjoy (their life) for a while.**

Transliteration *Fa lau la\_ka\_nat qaryatun a\_manat fa nafa'aha\_ima\_nuha\_ illa\_ qauma yu\_nus(a), lamma\_ a\_manu\_ kasyafna\_ 'anhum 'aza\_bal khizyi fil haya\_tid dunya\_ wa matta'na\_hum ila\_hin(in).*

[1479. The point of the allusion here may be thus explained. Nineveh was a great and glorious City. But it became, like Babylon, a city of sin. Allah sent the prophet

Yunus (Jonah) to warn it. Full of iniquities though it was, it listened to the warning, perhaps in the person of a few just men. For their sakes, the All-Merciful Allah spared it, and gave it a new lease of glorious life. According to the chronology in the last note the new lease would be for about two centuries, after which it perished completely for its sins and abominations. Note that its new lease of life was for its collective life as a City, the life of the Present, i.e., of this World. It does not mean that individual sinners escaped the spiritual consequences of their sin, unless they individually repented and obtained Allah's mercy and forgiveness.]

### **Muhammad Asad's Translation:**

**10:98** For, alas," there has never yet been any community that attained to faith [in its entirety,] and **thereupon benefited by its faith, except the people of Jonah.** 120 **When they came to believe, We removed from them the suffering of disgrace [which otherwise would have befallen them even] in the life of this world, and allowed them to enjoy their life during the time allotted to them.** 121

**[Asad's comments:** 120 The Qur'an points out in many places that no prophet has ever been immediately accepted as

such and followed by all of his people, and that many a community perished in result of the stubborn refusal, by the majority of its members, to listen to the divine message. The only exception in this respect is said to have been the people of Nineveh, who - after having at first rejected their prophet Jonah, so that "he went off in wrath" (cf. 21 : 87) - **later responded to his call in unison**, and were saved. For the story of Jonah, see 21 : 87-88 and 37:139-148, as well as the corresponding notes; a fuller narrative, which does not conflict with the Qur'anic references, is forthcoming from the Bible (The Book of Jonah). In the context of the passage which we are now considering, the mention of Jonah's people - who alone among the communities of the past heeded their prophet before it was too late - is meant to warn the hearers and readers of the Qur'an that a deliberate rejection of its message by "those against whom God's word [of judgment] has come true" (see verse 96) is bound to result in their spiritual doom and, consequently, in grievous suffering in the life to come.

121 Lit, "for a time", i.e., their natural life-span (Manor XI, 483). ]

## **Muhammad Pickthall**

If only there had been a community (of all those that were destroyed of old) that believed and profited by its belief as did the folk of Jonah. **When**

they believed We drew off from them the torment of disgrace in the life of the world and gave them comfort for a while.