

Jonah

Who, When, Where

Written by Jonah. Jonah was a prophet of Yahweh sent to a foreign capital with a message of repentance.

During the reign of Jeroboam, one of the kings of the divided kingdom. This story took place around 765BC.

Jonah was in Jerusalem (in the presence of Yahweh), and obediently went to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, (in what is now northern Iraq), and which at the time was one of the largest cities in the world.

He originally set out for Tarshish. We don't know where that was, but of course there are a lot of theories, all the way from a port in Spain to somewhere in Persia. But one thing is for sure... it's nowhere near Nineveh which is about as far inland as you can get.

Summary

Jonah, a prophet of Yahweh is given the job of going to the foreign capital of Nineveh and preaching repentance to them. Jonah decides he has a better idea and heads off by boat to Tarshish instead. As expected there is a huge storm which threatens the boat but they throw him overboard where he is swallowed by a huge fish.

Jonah repents and calls out to Yahweh who rescues him and sends him again to Nineveh. This time Jonah obeys and the Ninevites are cut to the heart by his message and they repent of their ways to such an extent that Yahweh relents on his plan to destroy them.

The amazing thing about the story of Jonah is that his act of rebellion caused him to spend 3 days and nights in a fish. But this is the one sign that Yeshua said was given to show the Jews about him. That he would spend 3 days and nights in the earth.

Before You Read

So the Ninevites are not God's people. They worship idols. Their lifestyle is an abomination. What do you think Yahweh should have done with them? Would you go and preach to them?

What if Yahweh spoke to you directly and told you to go?

Do you think it is amazing that Yahweh even uses our rebellion for his purposes?

Key Verses

Jonah 1:7

They all said to each other, "Come, let us 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.

This seems to happen a bit in the Bible. If they're not sure about something they cast lots. Toss a coin. Draw straws. But it always turns out correct. How does that happen? Why don't we do more of that today?

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

Jonah reveals at the end that the reason he didn't want to go because he knew they would repent and then they wouldn't get the punishment from Yahweh that he knew they deserved.

How do you feel about that?

How do you feel about drug addicts? Do they deserve to be saved?

If you had the opportunity to witness to Hitler moments before he died... would you do it?

What does the story of the vine tell you about God's heart for people?
And about your right to judge who hears of his salvation and who doesn't?