

The Story of Jonah

Jonah's True Fish Story!

“The word of the Lord came to Jonah: ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because its wickedness has come up before me.’ ”

New International Version (NIV)

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.®](#) Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

According to NIV notes, Jonah was a prophet who was believed to have lived after the times of Amos and Hosea and before the fall of Samaria to Assyria in 722-721 B.C. The story of Jonah is one of the best-known stories in the Bible. When the Lord called him to warn the wicked city of God's pending judgment, Jonah refused to obey the call and ran in the opposite direction, sailing by ship towards Tarshish. Enroute to Tarshish, the ship encountered an incredible storm. Jonah was tossed overboard, but according to the Bible, “the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah.” Jonah was in the fish for 3 days and 3 nights, during which time, Jonah had time to pray, and he agreed to go to preach to Nineveh.

The result was an extremely successful missionary trip. The king decreed a fast for all the people and beasts of Nineveh—sackcloth and fasting, no food or water, repentance from evil ways and violence. Sure enough, over 100,000 Ninevites

believed God and repented. God had compassion and did not bring the destruction he had promised. However, Jonah was NOT pleased! He did not like the Ninevites, and he did not want to see them saved. Jonah became angry, went out of town, and sulked!

To help Jonah deal with his anger, God created a vine to give him shade. The next day, God created a worm to chew the vine and cause it to wither, leaving Jonah back in his state of anger. Here is the END of the story:

“But God said to Jonah, ‘Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?’ ‘It is,’ Jonah said. ‘And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.’ But the Lord said, ‘You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?’ ”

This is the only book in the Bible that ends with questions, questions about Jonah’s misplaced anger and lack of compassion for people. The questions are not answered! Perhaps Jonah was the one who needed to repent!!

[Return to website](#)

Dr. Robert J. Rapalje, Retired
Seminole State College of Florida
Altamonte Springs Campus
Email: rapaljer@mathinlivingcolor.com