

1.5 The Story of Jonah



Orion

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Jonah 1: 1 - 2

“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.’ ”

Jonah's True Fish Story!

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 anger. Here is the END of the story:

Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

And [Jonah] said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"

But the Lord said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?" Jonah 4: 9-11 New King James Version

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!

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