

Bible Snapshots



Jonah – God’s Infinite Mercy Author – Jonah

Facts

- The name Jonah means “dove.” Many have seen this as somewhat ironic because he was anything but the image of peace that a dove conjures. Furthermore, it seems he would use those “wings” to fly away from God. However, just like the people of Nineveh, God gave him a second chance. So perhaps it is more of a description of God’s attitude toward him – “peace.”
- He is one of the few prophets referred to by Christ specifically (Mt. 12:39-41)
- Jonah wrote during the time of Jeroboam II ca. 784-772 B.C., making him one of the early writing prophets, perhaps the second. (2 Kings 14:23-25). While many doubt the story and facts of Jonah, seeing it more of an allegory or “fish tale,” Christ verified it as true (Mt. 12:39, 40, 41; Lk 11:29, 30).
- His ministry is to the Ninevites, calling them to repent, but is mostly about the prophet’s own spiritual condition. The book has 4 chapters and 48 verses.

Contents

- Jonah tells the story of the prophet who is called to a foreign nation that he despises to bring them back to the truth and God’s will. Jonah tries to run, perhaps hoping that the time would simply expire for the people of Nineveh and God would destroy them. Yet, through some God engineered events, including three days and nights in the belly of a great fish, Jonah is brought back on task, preaches the message and witnesses a great return to God. Jonah, however, seems to resist such graciousness and mercy, desiring these folks not be given that chance, though he is. Perhaps a great deal of national pride and hard feelings have blinded Jonah. The book ends and we are not sure he even sees that the grace and mercy of God is for all men.

Type of Christ - He is like Christ in his – death burial and resurrection (Mt. 12:38-41)

Great Things in Jonah – wind (1:4); storm (1:5); fish 1:17); gourd, worm and wind (4:1-11)

Archeology

Nineveh’s population – skeptics doubt the 120,000 figure of Jonah, but documents found in Numrud, about 20 miles from Nineveh, that date back to this period record a feast of king Ashurnasipal II where 70,000 “chief people” attended to dedicate his palace. If the chief among them numbered so greatly then surely the 120,000 figure is not inflated.

Science and Jonah

Many have also doubted the “whale tale” of Jonah, saying that no species of whale has a throat large enough to swallow a man. First, the word often translated “whale” is actually “great fish.” It is furthermore a known fact that there are some large species of fish that are not only capable of swallowing a man, but have. These men survived because the air chamber in the fish were large enough to house them.

Key phrase / word / thought

- Arise and go(1:2)/Preach/salvation is of God (2:9)

Key chapters/verse - 2 – his prayer/ 3:2

Outline of the book of Jonah

- The Prodigal prophet (1)
- The Praying prophet (2)
- The Preaching prophet (3)

