

The Book of Jonah: The Truth behind the Legend (1)

# **It Goes Down, When the Right People Are Wrong**

# Background

- Jonah (“Dove”: Peace, Gen 8:11), son of Amittai (“Truth”) Was a Historical Person (2 Kgs 14:25)
  - He Was from Gath-Hepher (“Wine Press of Digging”), Which Belonged to the Tribe of Zebulun (“Honor,” Gen 30:20; Josh 19:10, 13), in t/ Northern Kingdom of Israel
  - He Lived under King Jeroboam II (793-753 BC), Who Took Back the Land Previously Lost to Aram, and Restored Israel’s Northern Border to Davidic Time.
  - Jonah Predicted This Event; and It Came True.
  - He Was a Popular Nationalist Prophet of Israel.

# Background

- Israel Was in Its Last Days of Glory
  - Kingdom Split (930 BC) due to Solomon's Idolatry
    - Idolatry Continued due to Jeroboam's Golden Calves in Dan and Bethel
  - Ahab's Marriage to Jezebel Brought in Baalism
    - Jehu's Slaughter of both Houses (841 BC) Cleansed Baalism
    - Idolatry Continued in Israel though the Golden Calves
  - Israel Was Oppressed by Aram (Syria, Damascus)
    - King Jehoahaz Prayed for a Savior for Israel (2 Kgs 13:1-9)
    - God Raised up Assyria, Which Wakened Aram in 806-772 BC
  - Israel Gained against Aram under Jeroboam II (793-753 BC); Only to Collapse under Assyria in 723 BC

# Background

- Assyria Was in a Temporary Down Time
  - Assyria Was Known for Military Might and Cruelty in Terrorizing the People of Its Conquest
  - Adad-nirari III (810-783 B.C.) Narrowed Their Pantheon to one god Nebo, Turning from Polytheism to Monolatry, Prepared the Ways for the Repentance
  - Assur-Dan III (772-754 BC) Experienced Military Defeat under the Urartians, Two Plagues (765, 759 BC), and a Solar Eclipse (763 B.C.).
  - Jonah's Visit Most Likely Happened during 759-754 BC

# Structure

	Ch 1-2 God Saved a Hebrew Servant	Ch 3-4 God Saved a Gentile Nation
Sin & Punishment	Jonah Was Disobedient (1:1-3) Gentiles Obeyed God (1:4-16) Jonah Brought the Trouble (1:4-5) Gentile Prayed Wrongly (1:6-8) Jonah Was the Trouble (1:9-12) Gentiles Prayed Rightly (1:13-16)	Jonah Was Obedient (3:1-4) Gentile Repented (3:5-9) They Believed in God (3:5a) They Humbled Themselves (3:5b-8a) They Hoped on God (3:8b-9)
Grace & Understanding	Jonah Was Saved (1:17 –2:10) God Gave Grace (1:17) Jonah Praised (2:1-9) God Commissioned (2:10)	Jonah Was Rebuked (3:10–4:11) God Gave Grace (3:10) Jonah Complained (4:1-3) God Explained (4:4-11)

# Jonah Was Disobedient (1:1-3)

- God Commanded Jonah to Go to Nineveh (Capital of Assyria, East of Israel), to Prophesy God's Judgment on the City (1:1-2)
  - He Was Like the 2 Angels for Sodom & Gomorrah,
  - Or Nahum on Nineveh Shortly before 612 BC
- Jonah Instead Bought a Ticket to Go by Ship to Tarshish (in Spain, West of Israel) (1:3)
  - He Foresaw That God Might Forgive the Assyrians (4:2), Who Might Become a Threat to Israel
  - The Servant of God Made up His Mind to Disobey

# Jonah Was Punished (1:4-16)

- Jonah Brought the Trouble (1:4-5)
  - Once the People of God Is Disobedient, God Is Their Enemy, Beside the World.
  - When God Punishes His Disobedient People, Other People (Innocent of the Specific Sins, Sinners Nonetheless) Would Be Involved, Too.
  - The Ship Almost Wrecked; the Sailors Prayed to Their Own gods, and Jettisoned the Goods.
  - Jonah Went Down from Jerusalem to Joppa, to the Ship, to the Bottom Deck; and Kept on Sleeping

# Jonah Was Punished (1:4-16)

- The Gentiles Prayed, Wrongly (1:6-8)
  - They Prayed Each to His Own God, of No Avail.
  - They Asked Jonah to Join the Prayer Team.
  - They Threw Lots and Singled Out Jonah.
  - They Asked Why He Brought the Trouble.



# Jonah Was Punished (1:4-16)

- Jonah Was the Trouble (1:9-12)
  - Jonah Claimed to Worship (“Fear”) the God of Heaven, the King of the Universe, the God over All Nations.
  - The Gentile Sailors Had Great Fear of the Hebrew God, as Asked about the Offense of Jonah.
  - Jonah Confessed That He Was Trying to Escape from His God’s Face.
  - Jonah Asked to Be Thrown into the Sea; He Knew That “The Wages of Sin Is Death” (Rom 6:23).

# Jonah Was Punished (1:4-16)

- The Gentiles Prayed, Rightly (1:13-16)
  - They Tried Not to Get Blood on Their Own Hands, for the Love of Life and Justice.
  - God Would Not Fall Short of His Standard of Justice
  - The Gentile Sailors Prayed for Forgiveness, before Throwing Jonah into the Sea.
  - The Sea Pacified, Bringing More Fear of the God of the Hebrews.
  - They Sacrificed to God and Promised More. This Is the Standard Practice of the Jews to God (Ps 116:17).

# Lessons and Applications

- The “Right People” (Chosen by God) Can Be Wrong When They Disobey God due to Their Limited Understanding.
- When the People of God Sin, They Will Be Punished More Than The Others.
- When the People of God Are Punished, They Bring Trouble to the Others around Them.
- The “Wrong People” Can Be Right, Contrasting the Errors of the “Right People.”