

JONAH

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INTRODUCTION

A. THE MAN AND THE DATE:

1. The Book of Jonah gives us an unusual insight into the character of the man.
2. His name and place of birth identify him as the prophet of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-25)

B. DATE: 780 B.C.

INTERPRETATIONS

A. The Book of Jonah differs from all other books of the prophets. It is written primarily from the historical point of view....the history of a man, a nation, and God.

B. THREE SUGGESTED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BOOK.

1. The Mythical: The mythical school assumes that the story is a myth that grew up around some incident in the history of Israel.
 2. The Allegorical: The allegorical view assumes that the story is an allegory of Israel's captivity, repentance, and restoration to its land.
 3. The Historical: The historical conviction accepts the position that Jonah lived as a prophet of God, that he went to Nineveh and preached to the people of that city, and that God spared the nation. It accepts as historical fact that before going to Nineveh Jonah fled from Jehovah, that a storm arose at sea, that the prophet was cast overboard and was swallowed by a great fish, and that later he was vomited up on the land. (Jesus placed His sanction on the story as historical fact by comparing it to His own death, burial, and resurrection [Matt. 12:39-41])
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THE MESSAGE

A. God is willing and anxious to save even the heathen nations if they repent.

B. Jehovah is the one universal God, the God the whole earth.

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LESSONS

- A. National sin demands national repentance.
 - B. One cannot run away from God. (J.W. McGarvey said, “Jonah learned, and through his valuable experience millions have learned, that when God enjoins a disagreeable duty, it is far easier to go and do it than to run away from it.)
 - C. God is able to use all incidents in the life of His servants for their good and His glory. (Sailors learned about God).
 - D. Opportunity begets challenges.
 - E. The infinite concern of God for life is shown in contrast to the concern of man
for the material.
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ASSIGNMENT:

- A. PREACH GOD’S MESSAGE.
 - 1. Jonah was told where to go and what to preach (Compare Mark 16;16).
 - 2. BUT he did not really care for the salvation of this great city.
 - 3. To Jonah, the destruction of Nineveh was deserved and even desired.
 - B. GOD’S EMPHASIS ON THE MESSAGE: not on the man or the method.
 - C. “CRY AGAINST” is far removed from the pseudo-intellectual, detached “win friends and influence people” philosophy of too many pulpits.
Jonah is not the last preacher who found a ship for Tarshish rather than face his Nineveh.
 - D. THE VALUE OF DISCIPLINE
 - E. JONAH CARED not for Nineveh, so he could hardly rejoice when repentance on her part saved her from destruction. It is only when we care for men while they are lost, and evidence that concern by reaching them with the gospel, that we may rejoice with the angels in heaven when they repent.
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THE MIRACLES

- A. One should distinguish between “an act of God” and a Miracle.
 - B. Storm...act of God....could be miracle but not necessary.
 - C. Fish....
 - D. The preserving of the life of a man in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights and the ejecting of him upon the land would be a miracle!.
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Book Preserved Because....

- A. GOD COMMISSIONS JONAH TO GO AND PREACH.
 - 1. *“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it;”*
 - 2. Jonah had to choose....Obey or Disobey.
 - B. THE GREAT COMMISSION:
 - 1. *“And he said unto them, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.’”(Mark 16:15).*
 - 2. We have to choose....Obey or Disobey.
 - 3. Are we carrying the gospel to the world today?
 - C. TO ALL MEN EVERY WHERE THERE ARE BUT “TWO CITIES” ON YOU MAP. THE NINEVEH OF OBEDIENCE AND THE TARSHISH OF DISOBEDIENCE.
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