

Jonah

Jonah 1- 4



Jonah is swallowed by a great fish before he carries out the Lord's call to repentance to the city of Nineveh.



The Story

In the days before Jesus came to live on earth, God chose certain men to preach His Word to the people. These men were called prophets. One of God's prophets was named Jonah.

God told Jonah to go to a very large and very wicked city called Nineveh and tell its people that God would destroy them because of their sins and their unbelief. Instead of obeying God and going to Nineveh, Jonah tried to run from God. He got onto a ship sailing to the city of Tarshish, which was very far from the city of Nineveh.

The Lord knew what Jonah was doing and He made a storm come up which made the water full of waves. The sailors were afraid their ship would sink, and they prayed to their false gods for help. The storm did not stop. The captain of the ship asked Jonah who he was and what he was doing. Jonah told the sailors that he was running away from God and that the storm was because of his sin. God was teaching him not to run away and disobey Him. Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea so that the storm would stop. The sailors threw him over the ship into the water. Immediately the storm stopped.

But God did not let Jonah die. He loved Jonah and wanted to forgive him and save his life. God caused a large fish to swallow Jonah alive! For three days and three nights Jonah lived in the belly of the fish. Jonah was sorry for his sins and he prayed to God to forgive him. God heard Jonah's prayer and caused the fish to spit Jonah up onto dry land.

God told Jonah again to go to the

wicked city of Nineveh and tell them God was angry with them because they did not believe in Him and did bad things. This time Jonah obeyed God and told the people of Nineveh what God had said. The Lord caused the people to be sorry for their sins and to trust in Him to forgive them and save them. Even the king of Nineveh was sorry and turned to God. God saw their hearts and knew they trusted in Him and He did not destroy them.

Jonah should have been happy that God forgave so many people, just as God had forgiven him. But instead, he was angry that God did not destroy them. God told him that he should show love and kindness to all people because God wants all people to believe in Jesus and be saved. In the Bible we hear God tell us the same thing. We disobey God too, just like Jonah did, and yet God loves us and forgives all our sins because of Jesus who died to take our sins away. Now we will want to love others and tell them about Jesus' forgiveness also.

God calls us to deliver the message of repentance to the unbelieving world.

Passages

Matthew 4:10 - 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'

1 Timothy 2:3-4 - God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Psalms 143:10 - Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God.

Hymn - TLH #400 v. 1, 5 (Supplement 2000 #786 v. 1, 5)

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Help me to see my sins and feel sorry for them. Help me to trust in You for forgiveness. Thank You for dying for all people. Help me to love all people and tell them about You. Amen.