

## MINOR PROPHETS

### Jonah

**The man-** From the village of Gath-Hepher about 4 mi. NE of where the city of Nazareth would be in the future, in the region of Galilee. His personality is quite obvious as we can see in this book.:

- His zeal for the Lord- he wanted the enemies of God destroyed....
- His hatred for sin and those who practice it- he wanted them dead....he not only hated the sin they had committed, but the people as well...not fit to live.....

**Date-** around 780 B.C. During the reign of Jeroboam II. (**2 Kings 14:23-25**) While Jeroboam II was busy expanding the borders of his kingdom, Assyria, their enemy, was becoming a threat to them. However, Assyria had great turmoil within their ranks at this time. They were hampered by internal strife, certain provinces under their control were rebelling and trying to pull away from their rule. Not only were they suffering from within, but from without as well. Urartu, a great power at the time, was flexing it's muscles, so to speak, in the region of Assyria, posing a threat to their borders near the Caspian Sea. With all this turmoil going on amongst them, maybe this contributed to their eagerness to repent at the preaching of Jonah.

**Message-** Repent or Perish. This warning was given to a Heathen nation....Jonah was sent to the city of Ninevah, the capital city of Assyria, the enemy of Israel. Thus God was showing his desire for even the Heathen nations to be obedient to him. This city was given a specific time period in which to repent....40 days.....little time to think it over, what they would do. At this time, Israel was on the march as well, expanding the borders of its kingdom at will. Perhaps Ninevah possibly fearing it would be part of their expansion, would be next, weighed their response very carefully, to the preaching of Jonah.

The message of Jonah had great success!!! The people of Ninevah, from the king down to the common people repented at the preaching of Jonah, and God allowed them to live, much to the disappointment of the prophet Jonah.

#### **Other notes of interest:**

- Many believe this account is just a made up story. Others think it to be an allegory depicting Israel's own captivity, repentance and restoration. Jesus, however gives it credibility as an actual historical event, true to history, in **Matt. 12:39-41; Lk. 11:29-32**. He compares his time he will spend in the grave with the time Jonah was in the belly of the whale. Thus showing that this account had historical significance.
- Two miracles are recorded in this account.
  - o First miracle- 1:17- Jonah survived 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish. There are fish large enough to swallow a man, however to survive 3 days and nights while in its belly, is not feasible. Thus a miracle.
  - o Second miracle- 4:6- God prepared a gourd to grow up over night to form a shelter for Jonah, to shield him from the hot afternoon sun. Again, vines do this all the time, grow up to make shelters for man to find comfort in. However to do this overnight is not feasible. Hence a miracle.
  - o Even though these two miracles happened at this time, they had no influence whatsoever with whether Ninevah would repent or not. The people of Ninevah had no knowledge that these had taken place at all. Only Jonah and God knew about them.

## QUESTIONS

1. Where was Jonah from? (2 Kgs. 14:25; Josh. 19:13) How do you explain John 7:52 in view of this?
2. Of what did Jonah prophesy during the reign of Jeroboam II? (2 Kgs. 14:25-27)
3. Discuss the contrast between Jonah's faith and his lack of faithfulness in Jonah 1:1-12.
4. What did God prepare for Jonah? (Jonah 1:17; Matt. 12:39-41)
5. Describe Jonah's "conversion" in Jonah 2.
6. Where was Nineveh? Over what country did it rule?
7. What message from God did Jonah preach to Nineveh? (Jonah 3:1-4)

8. How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah's preaching? Why did they have reason to believe his message would come to pass? (Jonah 3:5; cf. Lk. 11:30)

9. Define repentance using the Ninevites as a model. (Jonah 3:5-10; Lk. 11:32)

10. Why was Jonah displeased and angry over God's decision to not destroy Nineveh? (Jonah 4:1-5)

11. How did God teach Jonah a lesson on mercy? (Jonah 4:6-11)

12. What lessons can "WE" learn from this account of Jonah?