

Wrong Way Jonah (Jonah 1:1-16)

Grace Chapel August 27, 2008 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO JONAH

Author: Jonah, the Son of Amitai, a prophet from Gath Hepher (2 Kings 14:25)

3 miles NE of Nazareth in Galilee

Destination of the Book: The Northern Kingdom (Israel)

Date: Jonah ministered during the reign of Jeroboam the 2nd (King of Israel)
Jeroboam the 2nd reigned from 793 BC to 753 BC

Jonah prophesied that Jeroboam would reconquer lands Israel had previously lost:
Jeroboam the 2nd's victory occurred 773 BC or a few years earlier

The events recorded in Jonah's book occurred in 759 BC

What would account for Jonah's reluctance to preach in Nineveh?
He recognized that God is gracious

He inferred from the prophetic warning that Nineveh would be spared

He was aware of Hosea 11:1ff.

Jonah needed some time to see his foolishness:
He probably wrote within a few years after 759 BC

Evidence that Jonah later saw his foolishness

What made him see his foolishness?

The Lord commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh to prophesy destruction, but he went down to Joppa & boarded a ship going to Tarshish to flee from God's presence (1:1-3)

The word of the Lord came to Jonah: a prophet (1)

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, a powerful and growing empire (2a)

Cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me (2b)

What was their wickedness?

Jonah sought to go in the opposite direction to (to Tarshish) escape the Lord (3)

Jonah went down to Joppa

Jonah went down into the ship

It had more than one deck

It had sails

It had oars

The Phoenicians traded throughout the Mediterranean region

The Lord sent a great storm that was ready to break the ship, so fearful seamen prayed, dumped cargo, urged everyone to pray to his gods for deliverance (including the sleeping Jonah), & finally cast lots to find the culprit (1:4-7a)

The Lord sent a great storm that threatened to break up the ship (4)

The frightened seamen prayed, dumped cargo & urged everyone to pray to his gods (5)

Each prayed to his gods (the word is plural)

The captain would be reluctant to dump cargo, but he was desperate

The chief rope-puller was shocked that Jonah slept; he urged him to pray (6)

Gentile polytheists needed to urge Jonah (the prophet) to pray

[Nothing worked] so the seamen cast lots to find the culprit (7a)

The lot identified Jonah, so they interrogated Jonah (to learn how he had offended the gods); Jonah relied that he was a Hebrew worshipper of the One God, who created both sea and dry land (7b-9)

[Even though the seamen were polytheistic unbels, God made] the lot identify Jonah (7b)

They interrogated Jonah (to determine if the lot had found the right culprit) (8)

Jonah said he was a Hebrew worshipper of the One God, creator of sea & land (7b-9)

The seamen were astonished that Jonah would try to flee from God, the creator, so they asked his advice for calming the increasingly stormy sea; He told them that casting him into the sea would make the sea calm (10-12)

The seamen were astonished that Jonah would try to flee from God, the creator (10)

They asked his advice for calming the increasingly stormy sea (11)

Jonah said that casting him into the sea would calm it (because he was the problem) (12)

The seamen tried unsuccessfully (instead) to row to shore, so they prayed to Jonah's Lord, that He would hold them guiltless, because God has done as He pleased (& they were trying to do what He wanted) (13-14)

The seamen tried failed to row ashore (rather than throwing Jonah overboard) (13)

The seamen prayed that God would hold them guiltless, since He had done as He pleased (and they were trying to do what He wanted) (14)

The sea became calm when they threw Jonah into the sea, so they (went ashore) and sacrificed to the Lord and vowed (to testify of His deliverance) (15-16)

The sea became calm when they threw Jonah into the sea (15)

They (went ashore) & sacrificed to the Lord & vowed (to testify of His deliverance) (16)

CONCLUSION:

**Jonah's running from God put him under discipline, but drew others to the Lord
(God accomplishes His purposes in spite of our rebelliousness).**

Only later would Jonah realize that God was sending him to Nineveh for his own God and for the good of Israel (the northern kingdom).