

Jonah, God's Unwilling Messenger?

I want to talk about Jonah, his story and how it relates to us. As I did research about Jonah, some people believe it to be a fairy tale, some thought it to be satire, but I believe it to be true. I will back this up later. Now Jonah lived sometime from 9 century BC to 8 century BC (year 800 to year 700 BC) Let's start with the beginning of his story. Starting in verse 1 we find the word of the Lord coming to Jonah, verse 2 is the command from God. Instead of listening to God Jonah decides to flee,

Now is this the beginning of Jonah's story, but he is also mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 and these events took place sometime from 793 -753 BC during the lifetime of King Jereboam II.

This left me with some questions. Did the events in 2 Kings 14:25 come before the Book of Jonah or after? How many other times did the Lord use Jonah? Only these two events are recorded. One day when I have died and gone to Heaven I will get the answer.

Jonah knew why the sea was raging, he knew it was because of him. He took pity on the sailors knowing full well his actions alone caused the Lord to create a mighty storm, I believe Jonah would have survived if the ship had come apart (God had a purpose for him to fulfill) but would the sailors have?

Jonah 2 starts with Jonah crying out to God

I read a comment on Jonah being in the belly of the fish for 3 full days until he finally decided he should start praying for God's help and forgiveness. Also to declare his willingness to complete his purpose.

Jonah 3 starts with God speaking again to Jonah and giving him the command to go and preach his message. Now when I first researched Jonah, I thought he was judging the city on just their sins, but as I found reading, it's because the people of Nineveh are Assyrians. Jonah has a deep hatred for these people, they are idolatrous, proud and ruthless nation bent on world conquest and had been a threat to Israel for a long time. I also read a comment in the intro to the book of Jonah in my bible, that Jonah's view of God was too restrictive. He believed God's compassion was only extended to the elect of Israel. He is trying to limit God.

Just a couple of thoughts as I was reading Jonah, he was 3 days in the fish, it's a 3 day walk across the city, the city will be overthrown in 40 days. God uses numbers a lot, I will come back to these numbers.

Jonah 4 finds our prophet angry and upset with God. Jonah knew that if the people repented, God who is merciful and just, would forgive them. Now if he didn't tell them, how were they to know they needed to repent? God could have just forgiven them, but God chose to use a man to send his message.

Jonah gave his message one day into the city, people fasted and started to turn from their evil ways. Jonah was very angry with God, he was angry that he had to leave his home to deliver God's message, I also believe he was angry because the people were going to be forgiven.

I believe Jonah must have had a relationship with God prior to him sending him to Nineveh, the way he speaks to God is like a rebellious teenager yelling at their parents.

From reading Jonah and other commentary on the book of Jonah, it's unclear to me if he left the city after he gave God's message the first day or waited longer. He saw the people repent and went out of the city. He sat to watch and wait to see if after the 40 days have passed, the city remains or if God destroys it.

We see God forgave and also taught Jonah a lesson in the process.

The story of Jonah is a forerunner to Jesus. Some people believe it's just a story, that it didn't happen. This is why I say it's true, even Jesus himself mentions Jonah in two of the gospels

When the people repented God forgave them, God loved us so much he sent Jesus to die for us, to reunite us with him. Once again and forever showing his grace, mercy and love for his children. Now how does the story of Jonah relate to you. Has God asked you to do something you found uncomfortable? Did you try to run and hide from him? If you compare Nineveh to what the world currently looks like, we are far worse off. There are plenty of people prophesying and giving the word of the Lord, but how many people are listening? **Matthew 28:18-20** This is the great commission that Jesus gave us, believe me when I say I fall short every day. I know I will never be perfect in this world, these are some questions I am asking myself and maybe you are also asking. Do I look at people like Jonah did? Am I doing what the Lord is asking of me? I bring this up for self reflection not condemnation.

I am going to wrap up with the numbers in the book of Jonah. Numbers 3 and 40