

30 AMAZING BIBLE STORIES YOU MAY NOT KNOW

#13: Jonah: So Much to Tell

THE JONAH STORY YOU DO KNOW: A REVIEW

The book of Jonah is one story in two parts:

God's Word comes to Jonah (1:1)	God's Word comes to Jonah (3:1)
The Mission Announced (1:2)	The Mission Announced (3:2)
Jonah Disobeys (1:3)	Jonah Obeys (3:3-4)
Punishment and Resurrection (1:4-2:10)	Punishment and Correction (3:5-4:11)

- Almost everyone remembers that Jonah ran from God, was caught, and saved by a fish.
- Almost everyone remembers that Nineveh repented and was spared by God.

THE JONAH STORY YOU MAY NOT KNOW: A PLANT – JONAH 4

- *Many* may not remember the ending of the story.
- The book of Jonah is filled with accounts of the Lord using *nature* to fulfill His will. The book begins with a storm and ends with a worm.
- As Jonah sulks outside the repentant city, God blesses him with a **gourd** (Jonah 4:6)
 - Hebrew: *Kikayon*. In truth, we do not know what kind of plant it was.
 - It is often translated **gourd** or *ivy*, but it is an unknown plant.
 - The plant made Jonah **exceedingly glad** (Jonah 4:6).
- After rejoicing in his own comfort, Jonah is quickly disappointed.
 - That night, **God prepared a worm** (Jonah 4:7).
 - God also sent a **vehement east wind** (Jonah 4:8).
- The story *suddenly ends*, seemingly unfinished.

WAS JONAH ALIVE? (AND OTHER THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW)

- The most common understanding of Jonah in the fish is that he was alive the entire time. However, this is *not* the only understanding (and perhaps not even the best).
- Matthew 12:40 tells us that Jonah was a *foreshadow* (type) of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Note especially: **As Jonah was...so shall the son of man be.**
- Could Jonah have been *dead* and then *resurrected*? Can an *alive* man be a type of a *dead* man?

- Jonah had his most famous role in the book of Jonah. But that was not all! See 2 Kings 14:25.
- Could Jonah have been seen even earlier than 2 Kings 14?
 - 1 Kings 17:17-24 records the story of the resurrection of the widow at Zarephath.
 - The recollection of this story caused the citizens of Nazareth to want to kill Jesus – Luke 4:25-26, 28.
 - Jonah had a father and was from Gath-hepher – just 2 miles from Nazareth. Could this father have died when Jonah was young?
- If Jonah *was* the son of the widow at Zerepath, and he *was* dead in the fish, then Jonah is the only one we know to be *raised twice*.

YOM KIPPUR AND JONAH

- On the Day of Atonement, in the afternoon, Jews around the world read the entire book of Jonah.
- They do this to be reminded that *if God would accept the repentance of Nineveh, He will accept theirs as well*.
- When they are finished, they add three more verses: *Micah 7:18-20*.

JONAH AS ISRAEL

- The story of Jonah matches the prophetic story of Israel.
 - Called, but disobedient.
 - Got in trouble in the “sea” – compare Rev. 17:15 with Deut. 28:64-67.
 - Did not forget identity – Jonah 1:9
 - Cast away, and “salvation” came to the gentiles – Jonah 1:16 with Romans 11:15.
 - Raised again to both fulfill the obligation *and* to endure her “vine” and her “worm.”
- But what about two resurrections?
 - Ezekiel 16:6 with Ezekiel 37:1-5.
- Could it be that Jonah was a foreshadow of Israel?
 - Saved as a child, saved again after being dead?
 - Reluctant, yet used of God?
 - The Prodigal son and the Elder son all in one?
- Not everything fits perfectly in just about any interpretation of Jonah, but it does appear to be a story in which there is *so much to tell!*