

The Book of Jonah:

Introduction

Placement of the book: Old Testament

Theme of the Book: God's Mercy [Jonah 2:9]

The Author of the book: Jonah:

Time range of writing: Jonah was a prophet in Israel (the Northern Kingdom) around the year 825-784 BC. He was a contemporary of the prophet Amos. He wrote his prophecy after his return from Nineveh.

Summary:

Jonah details the journey of the prophet Jonah, who is commanded by God to preach repentance to the city of Nineveh. Having initially fled toward Tarshish, Jonah is swallowed by a great fish. After repenting and being spit out by the fish, he reluctantly fulfills God's command, leading Nineveh to repentance. The narrative highlights themes of obedience, mercy, and compassion.

Why Did Jonah Escaped the Mission that God assigned to him?

Jonah was the only prophet, at that time, whom the Lord sent to witness to a pagan country, Nineveh, capital of Assyria. Jonah realized through prophecy that the salvation of the Gentiles would come only as a result of Israel's refusing the faith, and he could not accept such a mission, so he ran away from the service, not out of hatred for the Gentiles but out of fear for his own so he ran away from the service, not out of hatred for the Gentiles but out of fear for his own. He might have realized through prophecy's shadow what St. Paul proclaimed about Israel: "...through their fall...salvation has come to the Gentiles... their fall is riches for the world" Rom. 11:11-12. [from: JONAH FR. TADROS YACOUB MALATY]

In love God reveals the weakness of His prophet, not to slander him but to give hope to any weak soul

Jonah's Journey caused many to return to God and believe, such as the sailors and the Ninevites.

After Jonah was thrown in the water and was swallowed by the whale. This became a symbolic act for the salvation of the Gentiles after Christ, the new Jonah, was laid in the tomb.

Who is Jonah?

- 1- JONAH 1. The word "Jonah" in Hebrew means "dove"
- 2- It was known in the Jewish tradition that Jonah was the son of the widow, whom Elijah the prophet rose from the dead at Zarephath of Sidon (1 Kings 17:10-24). Some think that this is a valid tradition, because it is only fitting that such a prophet who loved Israel be sent to Gentile Nineveh to witness to them to repent, being himself a Gentile on his mother's side
- 3- 2. Jonah, the son of Amittai, prophesied during the days of Jeroboam II, king of Samaria (2 Kings 14:25).
- 4- He was a prophet in Israel (the Northern Kingdom) around the year 825-784 BC
- 5- He was a contemporary of the prophet Amos. He wrote his prophecy after his return from Nineveh

NINEVEH

- The capital of the Assyrian Empire, which was renovated by King Sennacherib to become his capital city (2 Kings 19:36). To some, the present city of Mosul is situated half of old Nineveh
- The city was known for its wealth, greatness and beauty and the Assyrian kings used to take their spoils of war there and considered the rest of the world enslaved to it.
- The prophet Nahum called Nineveh 'the city of destruction' filled with lies and abduction, moreover the prophet Zephaniah foretold of its destruction.

The people of Nineveh

- who were originally Babylonians (Gen. 10:11), worshiped the goddess Ashtaroth.
- Its kings were known for their great cruelty, their pastime was to cut off the noses of their captives of war, to drain their eyes and cut off their hands and ears; then display them to be ridiculed by the people.

Was the book of Jonah the only one addressed to the Gentiles?

No, Two Books in the Old Testament are addressed to the Gentiles.

- 1- **The Book of Obadiah** concerns the people of Edom where the symbolic announcement of the destruction of the old bloody person (Edomites) together with raising of the new spiritual man (Zion) is shown.
- 2- **The Book of Jonah** is about the people of Nineveh and symbolically presents the acceptance of the Gentiles for the faith and their announcing their repentance and return to God.

CHARACTERISTICS of the Book of Jonah:

- 1- This book reveals the different facets of God's love for humanity.
- 2- He announces that He is the God of all; He cares for both Jews and Gentiles and wishes for the salvation of all
- 3- In love God reveals the weakness of His prophet, not to slander him but to give hope to any weak soul
- 4- In His love God brings out the good sides even of the Gentiles.
- 5- He sheds light on the wisdom and gentleness of the captain and the sailors that they deserved to enjoy faith
- 6- God in His love uses even inanimate creatures to fulfill His aim concerning man:
 - He sent the strong winds.
 - He prepared the whale to swallow Jonah.
 - He sent a worm to eat the gourd and damage it.
 - He sent hot strong Easterly winds to beat on Jonah's head.
- 7- Jonah is the First prophetic book focused entirely on God's compassion toward a Gentile city

The Coptic Church and the Application of the Book of Jonah:

How beautiful is the Church's choice! She chose this Book to be the prelude of the forty days of Lent! A beautiful story of repentance and fasting precedes the Great Lent by two weeks, that we may approach the holy forty days with a clean heart attached to the Lord.

{From: Contemplations on the Book of Jonah, by Pope Shenouda III}

[تأملات في سفر يونان النبي - البابا شنودة الثالث](#)

Resources and References:

English:

Fr. Tadros: JONAH FR. TADROS YACOUB MALATY

https://www.stminahamilton.ca/download/Books/Bible%20Commentary%20-%20Fr.%20Tadros%20EN/037_Jonah%20-%20Fr.%20Tadros%20Yacoub%20Malaty.pdf

Pope Shenouda : Contemplations on the Book of Jonah

https://www.truecopticorthodoxy.com/files/ugd/4a63b6_fe9e89c81d7c44fe9e04bdfc08a1c8aa.pdf

<https://st-takla.org/Full-Free-Coptic-Books/His-Holiness-Pope-Shenouda-III-Books-Online/05-Contemplations-On-The-Book-Of-Jonah-The-Prophet/En/Contemplations-Jonah-00-index.html>

Arabic

Pope Shenouda : تأملات في سفر يونان النبي - البابا شنودة الثالث :

https://st-takla.org/Full-Free-Coptic-Books/His-Holiness-Pope-Shenouda-III-Books-Online/05-Contemplations-On-The-Book-Of-Jonah-The-Prophet/Ta2amolat-Fi-Sefr-Younan-El-Naby_00-index.html

Jonah the Profit : Pope Shenouda

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