

JONAH AND THE NEW TESTAMENT



1 JESUS AND THE HISTORICAL JONAH



- Jesus recognized the historicity of Jonah (**Mt.12:41; Lk.11:29-32**). He called him a prophet, and quoted from the book.
- Jesus referred to the miracle of Jonah's recovery from the great fish (**Mt.12:40**). It is the fact of Jonah's experience in the great fish that Jesus refers to. Jesus based His call to repentance in His day to Jonah's historical message of repentance to Nineveh.
- Jonah is one of only four OT prophets mentioned by Christ [1] Elijah (**Mt.17:11-12**); [2] Elisha (**Lk.4:27**); [3] Isaiah (**Mt.15:7**); [4] Jonah (**Mt.12:41; Lk.11:29-32**). Liberals tend to dismiss the book of Jonah. But if one does not believe Jesus, they have a much larger problem.

2 NO PROPHET FROM GALILEE (Jn.7:45-52)



"They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." (**Jn.7:52**)

- Nicodemus (Pharisee) enters the picture (previously in John 3) and defends Christ's legal privileges (**Jn.7:50-51**). He did not defend Jesus directly, but he raised a procedural point in favor of Jesus.
- The Sanhedrin (**Jn.7:45**) challenged Nicodemus to search the Scripture and see that no prophet would come out of Galilee (**Jn.7:52**). They ridiculed Nicodemus, and disgraced him. The Galileans were objects of Judean scorn. They were asking him sarcastically if he was an unschooled Galilean.
- Either they knew Elijah (**1Ki.17:1**), Jonah (**2Ki.14:25**), Hosea, and Nahum (**Na.1:1**) were from the Galilee region or they are simply ignorant. In their rage they appear to make this false statement. Jonah was from Gath Hopher which is a town three miles north of Nazareth in Lower Galilee (**2Ki.14:25**).
- Nicodemus' colleagues did not reply rationally but emotionally. They had already decided Jesus' case without hearing Him. They did not want to listen to any new information that might prove that He was who He claimed to be. Because they could not refute the logic of Nicodemus' argument, they attacked his person.
- The Jews of Jesus' day seem to have regarded the Prophet and Messiah as two different individuals. The Messianic Son of David would come from Bethlehem. But where would the Prophet (**Du.18:15**) come from, Moses does not say.

GREATER THAN JONAH & SOLOMON

<i>Jonah preached judgment</i>	<i>Jesus preached grace</i>
<i>Jonah preached to one nation</i>	<i>Jesus' message is to the world</i>
<i>Jonah was disobedient</i>	<i>Jesus always did the Father's will</i>

3 JONAH IS A SIGN — [1] MESSAGE OF JUDGMENT; [2] 3 DAYS AND 3 NIGHTS (Mt.12:39-41; Lk.11:29-32)



³⁹But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: ⁴⁰For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (**Mt.12:39-41**).

"Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (**Jh.1:17**).

- Jesus has already performed many miracles or "signs". A sign is a tangible assurance that something prophesied will surely happen. God has given signs in the past to strengthen the weak faith of believers such as Abraham, Joshua, and Gideon. Jesus refused these critics because their motive was to trap Him not grow their faith. Their intent was to curb and discredit his influence among the people.
- The term "adulterous generation" is a metaphor for spiritual unfaithfulness (**Lv.20:5; Nu.25:1; Ho.1:2; 4:10,18; 5:3; Mt.16:4; Ja.4:4**).
- Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh because he brought a message of judgment (**Lk.11:29**). In like manner the Son is bringing a message of judgment to that current generation. By refusing to respond to Jesus' message they showed themselves to be worse than the Gentile Ninevites. The response of these Gentiles actually cries out and condemns these unbelieving Jews. The sign continues even today as the book of Jonah is read every year on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*).
- The main lesson is that the citizens of Nineveh will witness against the rulers of Israel because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. Further, the Queen of Sheba will also witness against them because she traveled a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom, yet these rulers are rejecting the wisdom of Christ who was in their very midst. So the example of the Ninevites is already condemning them.
- Jesus makes a strong Messianic claim by telling them someone (Himself) greater than Jonah and Solomon (**1Ki.3:12; 4:19-34**) is here. Jesus is saying His resurrection will prove He is the Messiah. The resurrection is the one sign that validates Jesus words and ministry. It is this sign that our faith is built upon. The resurrection should be the focal point of our witness to the lost. It is the final climactic sign of history.
- Nineveh, at this time, has already been in ruin for centuries. It appears they reverted within one generation to their old ways (**Na.3:7-8**). Yet, from Jesus' words it is clear their revival represented authentic saving conversion.