

## The Credible Story of Jonah

- Jonah – is it credible/incredible?
  - “Fish story” – Thrown overboard, swallowed by a fish, lived 3 days, thrown up on dry land...
  - Went into greatest/worst city on earth and his preaching immediately yielded repentance from king to the least of them...
  - Man sitting in desert heat was shaded by a plant that grew overnight
  - Are these key elements of Jonah believable? Are they accurate historic events?
- Who was Jonah?
  - Prophet in 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, during 41-year reign of Jeroboam II – 2 Kgs. 14:25
    - Compare 2 Kgs. 14:25 to 6:8-12 (Elisha) – Jonah’s reputation could have spread similarly
    - Worked much more as God’s messenger than just preaching to Ninevah
  - Jonah 1:1-3; 4:1-2 – Jonah hated Ninevah, welcomed its destruction, and knew God would want their repentance
- Jonah and pagan sailors
  - Fled from God, boarded ship; pagan sailors prayed to their gods while Jonah slept thru storm
  - 1:8-9 – Who are you? “I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”
    - Did he really fear the Lord?
    - How would you answer such questions?
    - Sailors then feared God, but showed compassion on Jonah...
  - 1:16 – Conversion, offered sacrifices and made vows. Did these men continue to serve God, telling others about that day?
- Jonah and great fish
  - Ch. 2 – Thought he might drown, then swallowed by fish, imprisoned 3 days (dark, smelly, miserable)
  - 2:10 – Finally unceremoniously freed; unknown after-effects
  - Likely returned home, unknown distance, unknown passage of time until next calling
  - Was news of this event widespread? Did this make him a more effective prophet? Would Ninevah have repented had he gone the first time? (Mt. 12:38-41)
- Preaching to Ninevah
  - Jonah arose and went (1:3 v. 3:3) – Same reasons/excuses as before existed (hate them, long journey, hard travel, etc.), but now Jonah has learned obedience
  - 3:4 – “Yet 40 days, and Ninevah shall be overthrown!”
    - Brief, yet convincing and effective preaching!
    - Who is this? Great prophet of Israel, who ran from God, then spent 3 days in belly of great fish...
  - 3:5 – People believed
  - 4:1, 5 – Jonah went outside city to watch for destruction, apparently didn’t believe repentance would last
    - Learns compassion, value of soul

- Applications
  - 2 Pet. 3:9 – God desires repentance. If Ninevah could repent, how about all of Assyria, other nations?
  - God used Jonah for His purposes
    - Turned sailors to God, sending them out wherever they went...
    - Made Jonah more effective prophet
  - Believability – would an Israelite fabricate this story, tarnishing name of famous prophet, allowing heathen nation to escape judgment, and elevate them above Israel?
    - Wouldn't have been accepted by Hebrews had it not been true
    - Wouldn't have been cited by Jesus were it not accurate