

Jonah: God Mercifully Restored His Runaway Prophet//Minor Prophets//Oct.29,Nov.5,2023

Main point:

The two acts in this mini-play both show God's mercy and sovereignty.

Act 1: when God called a prophet to go to a city to preach God's message, the prophet rebelled. God pursued the prophet, who continued to rebel, while pagan sailors repented. Finally God taught mercy to Jonah through the great fish.

Act 2: when God again called the same prophet a 2nd time to go to the same city to preach the same message, the prophet went. God caused the whole city to repent while the prophet continued to rebel, reacting in anger. Finally God taught mercy to Jonah through a plant and a worm.

Summary of the Book of Jonah:

Our fifth minor prophet 'God-theater' presentation of 'Jonah' is the most well-known, the most well-liked, and unique in other ways. It differs from other prophetic books in that the Book of Jonah focuses on the prophet himself, rather than the prophet's message to a nation. God did send Jonah with a message to a nation, but Jonah refused to deliver the message out of personal rebellion against God. As a result, Jonah was literally swallowed by a great big fish (we often say whale). While in the belly of the fish, Jonah repented and the reason for his rebellion was revealed. Jonah had feared that God would forgive the audience, the group of people known as the Ninevites. Later, when Jonah preached to them and they did repent, Jonah resented that. (4:1-3) In keeping with our God-theater pattern of 'judgment unto restoration,' God judged and restored both the people of Nineveh, and the prophet Jonah himself. Perhaps the biggest issue in the Book of Jonah is this: what will God do when the prophet becomes just like the audience? Answer: God will restore his prophet, and then restore the target audience, in His sovereign grace.

Themes of the Book of Jonah:

The mercy of God! To Nineveh. To Jonah. To pagan sailors on the boat.
The sovereignty of God! Storm, fish, plant, worm, wind, prophet, Ninevites.

The man Jonah:

- a fictional character in a story about a whale, or a real person in history?
- the Bible's evidence of Jonah as a real person: 2 Kings 14:25, Mt. 12:39-41
- in 2 Kings 14, we see Jonah as a previously faithful and fruitful prophet.

Outline of Jonah:

1:1-1:16, Jonah ran away, but God would not give up the chase!
1:17- 2:10, Jonah prayed from the belly of the fish//depths of the sea!
3:1-10, Jonah preached in Nineveh and there were mass conversions!
4:1-11, God is more merciful than His prophet.