Listening to the Prophets

Old Testament Minor Prophets

Jonah

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Introduction-Ryrie

- Some regard the book of Jonah to be an **allegory** written around 430 B.C.
- This view would hold:
    - Jonah represented disobedient Israel
    - the **sea** represented the Gentiles
    - the great fish was Babylon
    - Jonah's three days in the fish's belly symbolized the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.
- 2 Kings 14:25 states Jonah was a **real** person and was a prophet from Gath-hepher near Nazareth.
- Jesus treated Jonah's experience as **factual** (Matthew 12:38-41).
- Jonah was connected with the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (793-753 B.C.) as stated in 2 Kings 14:27.
- Jeroboam II had succeeded in reestablishing the power of **Israel** (north of Judah) which was previously controlled by King David and King Solomon.
- To date, there has been no Assyrian inscription found mentioning a religious awakening such as described in the book of Jonah.
- There was:
    - A plague in 765 B.C.

    - A total **eclipse** of the sun in 763 B.C.
    - A second plague in 759 B.C.
- These events were regarded by the ancients as evidence of divine **judgment** and could have prepared the people to receive Jonah's message.
- Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, conquered Israel in 722 B.C.
- This captivity would have been about **38** years after the preaching of Jonah.
- Whatever revival that took place apparently did not last very long.
- Israel's captivity was during the seventh year of King Hoshea, King of Israel, and the fourth year of godly King Hezekiah, King of Judah.
- King Shalmaneser laid a **siege** against Samaria for three years.
- After three years, Samaria fell (722 B.C.).
- Sennacherib became King of Assyria in 705 B.C.
- In 701 B.C., Sennacherib captured cities of Judah and threatened to capture **Jerusalem** (2 Kings 18:13-19, 37; Isaiah 36-37).
- God miraculously saved Judah and King Hezekiah.
- Sennacherib's army was destroyed by an angel of the Lord in which 185,000 soldiers died.
- Sennacherib returned home to Nineveh and was **murdered**.
- Babylon eventually became the major empire in the 7th century.

Chapter 1

- **Nineveh** was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire.
- Nineveh was very powerful and extremely well-fortified.
- Jonah was instructed by God to preach against the city due to its **wickedness** (1:1-2).
- For whatever reason, Jonah decided to flee the Lord's presence and sailed to **Tarshish**.
- Tarshish was on the southern tip of Spain near Gibraltar.
- God caused a storm to come and Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard.
- After Jonah was thrown overboard, a great fish swallowed him and the storm subsided (1:8-17).
- Jesus referenced this event in Matthew 12:40.

Chapter 2

- Jonah was in the fish's belly for **three** days.
- Jonah prayed to God for deliverance.
- Jonah was reminded of God's promise of restoration to those who looked toward the holy temple (2:4; 1 Kings 8:44-50).

Chapter 3

- God told Jonah a second time to go and preach to Nineveh.
- The city of Nineveh was very great and took **three** days to walk around its perimeter (about 60 miles-3:1-3)
- God spoke through Jonah and told the people of Nineveh they would be destroyed within **40** days if they did not repent (3:4).
- The people, as well as the King of Nineveh, repented and God did not bring calamity upon the city (3:10).

Chapter 4

- Jonah became **angry** with God for not destroying Nineveh.
- Perhaps Jonah was angry because it would now be hard to prove God was speaking through him.
- Nevertheless, the people of Nineveh believed in Jonah's words and repented.
- Jonah **sulked** (4:2-3).
- God gave Jonah an object lesson by providing him with a plant that gave shade during the day.
- The plant withered and Jonah became bitter.
- God reminded Jonah His love for all people was much greater than Jonah's **compassion** for the plant (4:10-11).

Summary

- Pride often gets in the way of God's best for our lives.
- We can become so concerned about our reputation or with what others feel about us we often lose focus and direction for what God has for us.
- We want others to know we are right and that we deserve justice when wronged.
- Jonah was so concerned about his reputation he lost sight of God's compassion for the people of Nineveh.
- We must stay focused on what is important to God and less focused upon our own needs.
- God's ultimate purpose is to bring all to Him.

- Let’s not hinder that plan by selfishly demanding justice on our behalf.
- God knows our needs and will take care of us in ways unimaginable.