

Jonah

Breakdown

- The very first verse identifies the book as telling the story of the prophet Jonah. The book was likely written between 793 and 758 B.C.
- Although the book is written in the third person, the traditional view is that Jonah is the author. If that is the case, he must have had a moment of serious clarity after the events took place! When you read the book, you'll see that if he really did write it, he wrote very honestly about his own faults.

Main Points

- Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh to preach repentance to the people as God had commanded because he felt they were his enemies, and he was convinced that God would not carry out His threat to destroy the city. After trying to run from God, spending three days and nights in the belly of a great fish, and finally obeying God's original commands, God did in fact change His mind about destroying the city because the people repented and turned to Him. Jonah reacted badly, but God never gave up on him.
- Based on Jesus' own words, Jonah's experience in the great fish points to Jesus' experience in the grave. Jonah brought God's message of repentance and salvation to Nineveh, but Jesus brought actual salvation to everyone who believes in Him.

Did you know?

- The book of Jonah is not like all the other books of the prophets. What makes this book so different?
- The other prophets we have read about boldly delivered God's message even in the face of great danger, but not Jonah. What did he do instead?
- The ship Jonah was on encountered such a terrible storm that the crew determined it had to be punishment for someone's actions. How did they find out Jonah was the problem?
- While Jonah was in the belly of the great fish, he turned back to God and prayed portions of 7 different Psalms. Do you know which ones he prayed?
- In all the prophetic books we have read so far, the people did not listen to God's message delivered by the prophets. Even though Nineveh was a pagan nation, the people responded differently. What did they do?
- Just as Jonah thought He would, God decided not to destroy the city of Nineveh. How did Jonah respond?

Further Thought

- Jonah figured out that when he turned his back on God, that also meant turning his back on God's protection. How can we keep from turning away from God?
- God stayed with Jonah even though he tried to run in the opposite direction from God's plan for him. What does the fact that God is always with us mean for us today?
- Jonah knew that God would have mercy on the people of Nineveh because that is who God is and He never changes. How is God merciful to us?