

On A Cruise With Jonah

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 27th, 2010 • Pastor Chris Lankford

But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

~Jonah 1:3 (NASB)

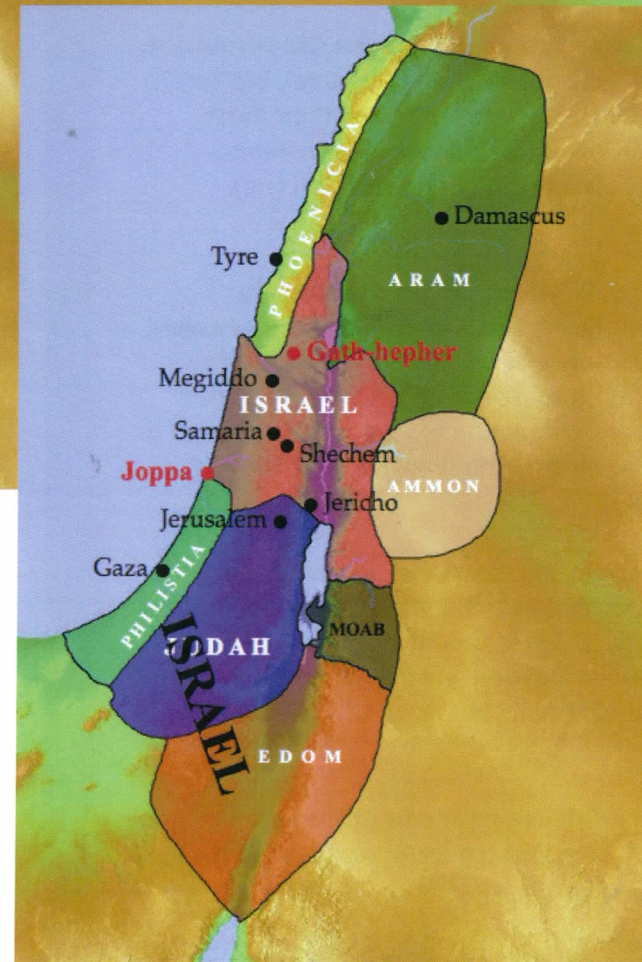
1) Jonah The Son Of Amittai

- A) Jonah, the son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher (2nd Kings 14:25), a prophet and servant of God, predicted the restoration of the land of Israel to its ancient boundaries through the efforts of Jeroboam II.
- B) Jonah lived either in the early part of the reign of Jeroboam (790–750 BC), or during the preceding generation. He almost certainly ministered between 800–780 BC. His early ministry would have made him popular in Israel with prophecies of victory & expansion of territory.
- C) It is popular (in scholarly circles) to refer to Jonah as a fictional allegorical story, and not an actual historical account. However, Jesus referred on two different occasions to the “sign of Jonah” (Matthew 12:38-41; Luke 11:29-32; Matthew 16:4) and spoke of Jonah’s experiences as parallel with His own entombment for three days.

- D) Further, Jesus cites the repentance of the Ninevites as a rebuke to the unbelieving men of his own generation. Since Jesus Christ speaks of both the physical miracle of Jonah’s preservation in the body of a fish and of the moral miracle of the repentance of the Ninevites without the slightest hint that He regarded the story as an allegory, we will also regard the story as being true historical narrative.

2) Running Away From God

- A) As a prophet of the Lord, it was normal for Jonah to receive “the word of the LORD” for communication to Israel (Jonah 1:1).
- B) However, unlike any other prophet in the Old Testament, Jonah’s prophecy was not intended for Israel, but for a foreign nation (the Assyrians) in one of their most influential cities (Nineveh). This would have been a shocking and disturbing command from God (1:2).
- C) In Jonah’s day, the Assyrians were well known for unspeakable atrocities against other nations. They were genocidal, and horribly violent. Skinning victims alive, pulling out their tongues, stacking heads into gigantic mounds, torture and mutilation were normal practices of the Assyrians. Their most influential city was Nineveh.
- D) Rather than preach to the Assyrians, Jonah decides to “flee from the presence of the Lord” (1:3). Jonah travels down to the South to Joppa, and then boards a ship headed to Tarshish, a location which is probably in the Southern portion of Spain, very far to the West.
- E) At first glance, Jonah’s fleeing seems ridiculous. But there is a lesson to be learned here of how we respond to God in the most difficult areas of our lives...



The “world map” during the time of Jonah, son of Amittai. Jonah was from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, near the Galilee region (Gath-hepher). Nineveh was part of the Assyrian Kingdom, and was one of their most influential cities. Joppa was a coastal city, known for its port and shipping industry. Tarshish is an unknown location, but probably in Souther Spain, far to the West (off the map).