

Communion Meditation – Jonah

Jonah 1.1-3

“Jonah Runs Away”

March 24th, 2013

Jonah is an Unusual Book (7 ways)

1. Prophets were typically sent to Judah or Israel | Jonah sent to Assyria (*enemy*)
2. Prophets usually obeyed | Jonah disobeyed by running away
3. Book is not series of prophetic utterances | it is a biographical narrative
4. Book contains only one 8-word prophecy | and it does not come to pass
5. Prophets plead for repentance | Jonah doesn't and is displeased to see it
6. Jonah has a disregard for life | pagans of the story respect life
7. Jonah misbehaves throughout | pagans turn to God in fear & repentance

Assyria (*capital Nineveh*) was a Superpower of that Day (*Wicked*)

- The story of Jonah occurs around 760 BC during reign of Jeroboam II
- During his reign (**2 Kings 14.23-27**) both Israel and Judah regained strength
- Assyria had weakened over past 50 yrs but would soon rise
- Assyria was cruel to conquered foes ~ Assurnarsipal (c.875 B.C.E.)
 - “I built a pillar over against his gate, and I flayed all the chief men ... and I covered the pillar with their skins ... some I impaled upon the pillar on stakes. Many captives ... I burned with fire ... From some I cut off their hands and their fingers, and from others I cut off their noses, their ears ... of many I put out the eyes.”
- Israel would fall to Assyria within 40 years of this incident

Jonah Flees from God

- The wickedness of Nineveh is personified as appearing before God
- God commands Jonah to go there and cry out against it
 - Nineveh is about 500 miles from him to the northeast
 - Jonah instead runs off to Joppa in the southwest (~60 miles)
 - He books passage to Tarshish (1k or 2k miles away – Italy or Spain)
- Jonah flees from “the presence of the Lord”
- We don't know why Jonah flees ~ Perhaps he believes God will let him go

Jonah lived during the final years of the Israelite nation

He was a prophet of God ~ but he was far from perfect

Yet God had a use for him ~ and would not let him get out of his assigned duty

God sends Jonah (prophet of the northern kingdom) to Nineveh (pagan city)