

Background

- Most literarily sophisticated book in the Old Testament
- Considered a "masterpiece": multiple devices and genres at work throughout
- Ultimately <u>Didactic</u>: Meant to teach the reader certain lessons about God and themselves.

Background

- Jonah: Prophet of the Lord during the reign of Jereboam II
- Access to the temple, well off, highly educated, part of the cultural "elite."
- Takes place approx 780-760 BC.

Starting thought:

- God gives Jonah a job to do…but its far less about the job than it is about Jonah.
- Lets read Jonah 1...

The Stairway of Rebellion

Jonah learns God's heart on a matter Jonah is passionate about...and Jonah disagrees.

God allows / creates even worse conditions to bring Jonah around

God allows / creates conditions to bring Jonah around

Jonah is

oblivious or

deliberately

Down into the Sea

Jonah Ignores / Runs Away

Down to Joppa

God takes Jonah up on his offer to keep going "down"...waaay down

Jonah adopts fatalism rather than come around

ignores the worsening situation

Down to Ship

Down to lowest part of Ship

Down to Sleep

Jonah 2

- How honest is Jonah's prayer?
- How much of Jonah's current situation is God's fault?

Jonah 3

- God doesn't let us skip steps (3:2)
 - Caught in a loop? What's the last thing God told you to do?
- Shortest prophecy in the bible:
 - 8 words in English and 5 words in Hebrew
 - and it gets the largest single incident response....est. 120,000+ people repent

Jonah 4 Grace and the problem of "ra'ah"



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"ra'ah" (hebrew)

"evil / disaster / discomfort"

"evil:" ("ra'ah") in Jonah

- 1:2- The Lord confronts Jonah with the evil of the city Nineveh.
 - God sees Evil, tells Jonah to go...as a vehicle of Grace - Jonah runs
- 1:7 The sailors decide to cast lots to find the source of the evil they experience.
 - The sailors recognize something has "brought this evil (disaster)" on them its God
- 1:8 The sailors confront Jonah, wondering why evil has come upon them.
 - The sailors realize someone is the source of this current "evil" - its Jonah

"evil:" ("ra'ah") in Jonah

- <u>3:8 The Ninevite king calls for inhabitants of the city to turn from **evil**.</u>
 - Nineveh turns from its "evil" in hopes that God will turn from sending "evil" on them
- 3:10 God sees the city turn from evil, and he relents from the disaster he was sending.
 - the Ninevites turn from their evil, and God turns his evil away

"evil:" ("ra'ah") in Jonah

- 4:1 God's gracious response to Nineveh displeased Jonah greatly.
- Jonah sees God turn away the "evil" He was sending, and Jonah feels "evil" about it
- 4:2 Jonah's anger arises from the fact that God relents from disaster.
- Jonah is angry specifically because He feels God is too typically Gracious - God often turns away "evil" from "deserving" people
- 4:6 The Lord appoints a plant to save Jonah from his discomfort.
- God sends a plant to rescue Jonah from his "Evil."

Occurrences of the key word (ra 'ah; "evil"/"disaster"/"discomfort") in Jonah

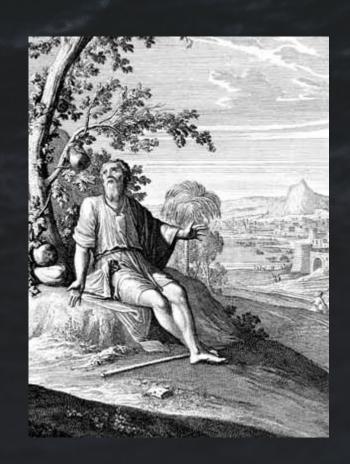
- 1:2 The Lord confronts Jonah with the **evil** of the city Nineveh.
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Jonah needs to GROW UP

- Chapter 4:6
 - As long as the means by which God "saves us from our "ra'ah" makes us happier or life easier, we welcome it
 - But what if our current "discomfort" (ra'ah), is what God is going to use to get at the "ra'ah" in your heart?

Turning the Story on us:

- What if the "Fish" is saving your life?
- What if God is more concerned about exposing your "ra'ah" and dealing with it, than providing you with shade?



And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

- Jonah 4:10-11 ESV

